

CHARMS
OF
THE BIBLE

JESSE BOWMAN YOUNG

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CHARMS OF THE BIBLE

A Fresh Appraisalment

By
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CHARMS OF THE BIBLE

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever:
The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold,
Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
In keeping of them there is great reward.

—Psa. 19. 7-11.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

—Collect from the Book of Common Prayer.

A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age—
It gives, but borrows none.

—William Cowper.

PREFATORY

To call forth in fresh array the beauties of the Scripture; to illustrate by pertinent citations and in systematic order those features of the Book which invest it with perennial attractiveness; and to indicate anew the main reasons which underlie its supremacy in the world—these are the aims of this volume.

This supremacy—considered in view of the Bible's literary qualities, its gradually perfected moral standards, its world-wide scope and message, its vitalizing religious doctrines, and its fadeless portrait of the Perfect Man; and especially when brought into comparison with the status and claims of other so-called sacred books, representing various pagan faiths—gives this Book a place which, like that occupied by the sun in the solar system, is unique, central, commanding.

This place of intellectual and moral rulership it holds to-day over a vaster realm than ever before—an empire which enlarges year by year, and thus steadily increases the multitudes in many lands who are able to say with one of the poets of ancient Israel, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psa. 119. 105

On the other hand, there are hosts of people who deliberately neglect or carelessly ignore the Bible, by reason of absorption in matters pertaining entirely to this life, or perhaps on account of an agnostic, worldly,

or religiously indifferent temper of mind; while there are vast numbers of professing Christians who seldom read, and never study, the Scriptures. The knowledge which they may possess with regard to the Book is due to the instructions they received in early life, and to the training which has reached them from the pulpit, Sabbath after Sabbath, as worshipers in the sanctuary. Living in the midst of Christian privileges and opportunities and enswathed in a Christian atmosphere, many people absorb, without conscious effort, from their enviring circumstances, biblical ideals, teachings, and principles which help to keep them from lapsing into heathenish ignorance, stupidity, and demoralization.

There are, moreover, great numbers of children and young people growing up without any settled habits of Bible study. Their needs are not provided for adequately by the current system of Sunday school lessons, which at the very best, and under the most skillful body of trained teachers that might be organized, can never afford any student of the Word a coherent and symmetrical acquaintance with the contents of the Bible. The knowledge our teachers and pupils are gaining in the Sunday school of to-day is piecemeal, scattered, and lamentably incomplete. It is a hopeful sign of the times that leaders in this work, who have until recently been blind to the demands of the age in this respect, are at last awakened to the needs of the rising generation, and have planned an improved system of Bible study for use in the new century upon which we have entered.

In view of these facts a fresh effort to bring forth out of the exhaustless treasure of Scripture “things new and old”; to suggest and unfold some of the beautiful qualities which lie on the very surface of its pages, and at the same time to indicate the fundamental charms which cannot be appreciated except by those who search for them as for hid treasures, but which, when found, are fraught with unfading grace—may not be amiss.

Matt. 13. 52

Prov. 2. 4

The charms of the Bible, as many know, become increasingly evident as one reads its pages; they are inexhaustible; like the mercies of the Lord, they are fresh every morning and new every night; they make their appeal to all classes of minds; and while some of them have to be uncovered and brought to light by patient inquiry, there are others which are so obvious, so simple, and so manifestly beautiful that the immature and the untrained, even, may by a little attention find them in profusion.

The man who has eyes and who keeps them in use hardly needs a guide to indicate to him the sun shining in the heavens. And yet many are blind to the beauties of the day—to the splendor of the dawn, the glory of the sunset, the sparkle on the water, and the play of color on the landscape when

“Dappled o’er with shadows flung from brooding clouds.”

Only by the aid of a teacher do we learn to unbraid a ribbon of sunlight through a prism and show the rainbow-colored threads, and the lines and bands on the spectrum which indicate the substances burning

in the sun—or to apprehend the fact that there are invisible rays in the light, by which remarkable effects are wrought. Even if a friend may do nothing more than suggest a new standpoint from which to get the best impressions of a river-view, or a mountain, or plain, his service is of value. Such service, perhaps, this volume may render in relation to the Book whose entrance bringeth light—into the heart, the home, the world.

Psa. 119. 130

It cannot be too strongly emphasized, in connection with any plan for Bible study, that while some phases of the Book are easily apprehended, there are others which require the best service of the scholarship of the world to discover them and bring them within reach of the ordinary student. Then, too, there are enshrined in Scripture countless attractions which can be discerned and enjoyed only by those who possess the enlightened vision of discipleship. We may, therefore, indeed be grateful that He whose last office during his earthly ministry was to open the minds of his followers that they might understand the Scriptures is still the Light of the world. He has graciously provided a Helper of whom he has said: “He shall bear witness of me: . . . He shall guide you into all the truth. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.”

Luke 24. 45

John 8. 12

John 15. 26

16. 13, 14

Thus the privilege of enlightenment is proffered to all who are in loyal and loving touch with the Redeemer. And for those who long to have their vision clarified, so as to understand the meaning, discern the beauty, taste the sweetness, and enjoy “the com-

Rom. 15. 4

fort of the Scriptures," there is left on record a brief but precious petition, uttered by the unknown author of one of the great Psalms, and repeated by devout souls in every generation since it was first set down:

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law!" Psa. 119. 18

It may be helpful to the reader to indicate here that the passages of Scripture quoted in this volume to illustrate various phases of biblical truth or usage are taken in part from the Revised Version, of which two editions have been in use by the author: (1) that of 1885; and (2) the one printed in 1898 for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, "with the readings and renderings preferred by the American Revision Companies incorporated in the text." Once in a while a marginal rendering has been called into play, and a few times quotations have been made from the great metrical version of Isaiah by Bishop Lowth, or from the similar version of the Minor Prophets found in the Cambridge Paragraph Bible. The ordinary version has been used when its renderings seemed to express the truth most clearly.

Jacksonville, Florida.

CHAPTER I
A WORLD-WIDE APPEAL

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of
silver,
And the gain thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies:
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared
unto her.
Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.

—Prov. 3. 13-17.

O God, whose Word lighteneth the eyes of the blind;
Vouchsafe us, we beseech thee, the light of thy truth; that
fashioning our lives with all meekness to the obedience of
heavenly wisdom, we may by humility in things temporal
attain to the glory of the things eternal; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

—Book of Common Prayer.

Thy thoughts are here, my God,
Expressed in words divine,
The utterance of sacred lips
In every sacred line.
Across the ages they
Have reached us from afar;
Than the bright gold more golden they,
Purer than purest star.

—Horatius Bonar.

CHAPTER I

A WORLD-WIDE APPEAL

THE appeal which the Bible makes is not limited to any single generation or period in human history. It is a book for all time, and for all times, ancient, mediæval, modern, and for the ages that are yet to come. The majestic declaration of the Master, spoken when he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a peasant without wealth or worldly power, still affords warrant of divine authority—
“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Matt. 24. 35 The songs of praise that comforted ancient Israel in their days of exile, for example, gave fortitude to the Huguenots when they were harassed and driven by their foes two thousand years after the Jewish captivity; and still later ministered cheer to the Pilgrim fathers of the American Republic in their forlornest days of toil and danger. The messages of the Hebrew prophets, spoken to the kings of Judah and Israel, are found in our own time rich in admonitions, instructions, and warnings for civic reformers, political rulers, and religious leaders in every land. The Decalogue, given to Moses, underlies the structure of English and American law in the twentieth century, and we can hardly imagine a civilization in the ages to come which would undertake to dispense with its principles and sanctions. This,

then, is one of the attractions of the Word—its universal message, to all ages and generations.

Nor is this Book confined in its ministries to any one race or language. Written entirely by Jewish authors, and originally in large part the possession of the Hebrew people alone, it foreshadowed from the very start its world-wide scope and purpose of grace, indicating that in the promise given to Abraham mercy and blessing were to be the inheritance in due time of "all the families of the earth." The language of the Old Testament is Semitic, and its imagery is cast in an Oriental mold; the verbiage and symbols are all taken from the habits and customs, the scenery and the life of Egypt, and Syria, and other regions of the East; and yet much of the message, apart from its transient and circumstantial wrappings, is for the world. This is one of the marvels of the Bible, taken as a whole, that its books—written chiefly in Eastern lands, by men of various vocations and environments, and in different periods of time, running through more than a thousand years, and in ancient tongues, the Chaldee, the Hebrew, the Greek—should in later generations be translated into hundreds of versions, covering substantially all races and languages on the earth, with their diversities of tradition, tribal prejudices, hereditary traits, idolatries, superstitions, cruelties and sins, and prove to be adapted to all the circumstances and needs, the heart-hunger and sorrow and fears of humanity everywhere, of all types, colors, and conditions. Is not this a marvel beyond parallel, that a book once wholly Jewish,

Gen. 12. 3

written by Jews for their own people—Hebrew history, Hebrew biographies, Hebrew folklore, Hebrew prophecies, Hebrew hymns, Hebrew maxims of wisdom—should finally prove, with its New Testament completion, to be a book for all men, in all time, and in all lands under the sun?

This Book, however, has not come to its throne without challenge or conflict; nor has it reached its place of power by the ministry of priestcraft, or ecclesiastical tyranny, or the sword of the warrior. In every age its claims have been searched, tested, denied, and sometimes scoffed at; but it has made its incessant appeal to the mind, the conscience, the universal heart of man, in such pleadings as these:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah. . . .	Isa. 1. 18
Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. . . . If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself. . . .	1 Thess. 5. 21 John 7. 17
Yea, if thou cry after discernment, and lift up thy voice for understanding; if thou seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah, and find the knowledge of God. . . . Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. . . . I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.	Prov. 2. 3-5 4. 13 Psa. 119. 59

Responding to such appeals as these, the Book has commended itself to all sorts and conditions of men in all ages and lands. It has been tested in every possible way, and has been found adequate to satisfy the inquiries and longings of "every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" on the face of the earth. Childhood everywhere has been attracted by its stories of little children, such as that of Ishmael,

Rev. 5. 9

cared for with his forlorn mother in the desert; Moses, hidden in an ark of bulrushes by the river, and watched over by his sister Miriam, and thus preserved for an unparalleled career; and the child Samuel, beginning at a tender age to minister in the sanctuary and thus opening the way for a life of extraordinary devotion and usefulness as the friend of the sovereign and the guide of the nation and one of Jehovah's great prophets. Youth has found in its elements of adventure and romance—such as the achievements of Gideon and of Samson, the story of Ruth, the combat between the shepherd boy of Bethlehem and the Philistine champion, and kindred narratives—material to satisfy its cravings for scenes of courage, peril, and fortitude; motherhood has been ennobled by the gospel of the infancy of our Lord; old age has been strengthened and comforted by the examples furnished by the patriarchs, by Zacharias and Elisabeth, Simeon and the aged prophetess Anna.

Business men have found in Proverbs maxims of prudence, of industry, temperance, frugality, and worldly wisdom, surpassing in the aggregate all that has been noted of this character in the literature of the nations. The great composers—Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Beethoven—achieved their most majestic and monumental works when they treated themes taken from the Bible—"The Messiah," "The Creation," "Saint Paul," "The Mount of Olives," for example. The most illustrious mediæval painters—Raphael, Rubens, Murillo, and in our own day Heinrich Hoffmann, Burne-Jones, Tissot, Holman Hunt,

and many others—have found in biblical scenes and characters scope for their utmost powers; indeed, they have invested the manger and the cross with new glory as they have sought to portray their messages to the world on canvas. And, in brief, where shall we stop if we once begin to mention the poets, like Dante, Milton, and Shakespeare, and in the recent century, Tennyson, Browning, Longfellow, Whittier, who have been quickened for their loftiest flights by lifelong study of the Word and constant treatment of scriptural scenes? The list, furthermore, of great scholars who have devoted their lives to the mission of studying the evidences, the languages, and the contents of the Bible, or to the task of expounding its teachings, would be interminable, were we once to start out to make it.

It is clear, therefore—from this mere glance at the varied scope of the Bible, and at the different fields of beauty and attractiveness whereby it has drawn to itself admiration, confidence, love, from countless hosts of readers and students—that the theme before us is vast to the point of exhaustlessness, this theme which sets before us the charms of the English Bible.

These charms cannot be compassed, or even suggested by way of enumeration, by any one writer. But, since the Bible is to each generation—by virtue of the progress of discovery in the Orient, the finding of ancient manuscripts, the making of fresh versions, and the constant indication of timely applications, modern helps and illustrations—actually a new book, one more effort to indicate its charms may not be

thrown away. Sometimes a single passage of Scripture has required the insight and labor of generations of expositors to develop its fullness of meaning; just as the polishing and cutting of the Kohinoor commanded the services of many lapidaries to reveal all its facets and planes of lustrous beauty. This volume, therefore, may find a helpful and appropriate place, we trust, as the work of one more toiler who would aid his fellow students of the Word to inquire how it has come to pass that the Scripture has attracted so many sorts of minds, in so many different ages, to its consideration. What is there in this book which charms the fancy, wins homage from all hearts, rewards the diligent student, instructs the ignorant, consoles the sorrowing, renews the fountains of life at their source and origin, and holds captive, from age to age, the attention of the world? What are some of the chief charms of the Scripture?

CHAPTER II
STRUCTURAL CHARMS

A word fitly spoken
Is like apples of gold in network of silver.
As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,
So is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.
As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
So is a faithful messenger to them that send him;
For he refresheth the soul of his masters. . . .
As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
So is good news from a far country.

My heart overfloweth with a goodly matter:
I speak the things which I have made touching the king:
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

—Prov. 25. 11-13, 25; Psa. 45. 1.

God, in the gospel of his Son,
Makes his eternal counsels known;
Here love in all its glory shines,
And truth is drawn in fairest lines.

The prisoner here may break his chains;
The weary rest from all his pains;
The captive feel his bondage cease;
The mourner find the way of peace.

Here faith reveals to mortal eyes
A brighter world beyond the skies;
Here shines the light which guides our way
From earth to realms of endless day.

Oh, grant us grace, Almighty Lord,
To see thy light, to know thy Word;
Its truths with meekness to receive,
And by its holy precepts live.

—B. Beddome.

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURAL CHARMS

ONE of the beauties of the Bible, little noted, hardly known, indeed, to hosts of people who are supposed to be familiar with the Book, consists in its structure—the arrangement of its books in the order in which they appear in our version, and the arrangement of the contents of each book when examined by itself. In this view at the very first glance one notes a very important fact, with which everybody who reads at all should be acquainted, but the importance and meaning of which are not frequently emphasized—namely, that this volume which we call the Bible is really a library of sixty-six volumes. Nearly all of these volumes may be procured in separate form, each bound by itself, and when thus arrayed before the eye the fact thus instanced becomes impressive and suggestive. The questions at once arise, What reason is there for binding them all in one book? What have these separate volumes in common? What tie or ties of unity make them one? Why are they arranged in the order in which we find them in our English Scriptures?

Directly we set out to make these inquiries we find that in the Hebrew Bible the books of the Old Testament occur in another order. In ancient times the Jewish rabbins distributed the books into three sec-

tions—the Law, the Prophets, and the Holy Writings. They counted First and Second Samuel as but one book; and so they did with First and Second Kings, and the Books of Chronicles, and with the twelve Minor Prophets. Thus they made out but twenty-four books in the Old Testament, whereas we have in our version, by a different allotment, thirty-nine.

Still another distribution of these books was made in the Greek Version, known as the Septuagint, where we find them grouped under the heads, the Historical, the Prophetic, and the Poetic books.

It is not worth while for us here to indicate in detail the arrangement of the books as thus found in the ancient versions. One who is interested in the matter can easily find in a good Bible dictionary, or in a work on biblical introduction, all the information that is needed in the case. But, on the other hand, it will amply repay us to give attention to the groups of books as they are distributed in our modern Bibles.

It is a matter of course that every reader of the Word should be familiar with this grouping. The order of the books as they now appear in our Authorized Version should be indelibly printed on the memory, so that reference to any one of them may become an immediate and automatic process of the mind and hand. When this general arrangement, or structure, of the Book is clearly seen there is added to it, as we have already suggested, a distinctive attraction. At the risk, therefore, of being commonplace, we need to give just here a summary of this arrangement of the books in the English Bible.

1. There are seventeen Books of History, to begin with, opening with Genesis, and reaching to and including Esther. Nearly all the contents of these books deal with the annals of the Hebrew people, starting with the call of Abraham, in the twelfth of Genesis, and coming down to the return from captivity, a record of about fifteen hundred years which brings to view a series of extraordinary characters and events, all strangely linked with the destinies of the human race.

2. The five Poetical Books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs—which are next in order, do not contain by any means all the poetry of the Bible, for many of the utterances of the prophetic messengers of Judah and Israel were written in poetic form, and should invariably be printed so as to show their poetical structure.

3. The closing section of the Old Testament, opening with Isaiah and closing with Malachi, is occupied with seventeen Books of the Prophets, who form a body of wise, heroic, matchless men, to the peculiar functions of whom we may have need to recur hereafter.

TWO TESTAMENTS, OR COVENANTS

Turning now to take a cursory glimpse of the other chief division of the Bible, it is evident that the two Testaments, or Covenants, are thus brought into the foreground as a line of cleavage in the structure of the whole volume. Those who have not stopped to make inquiry as to this distinction, and the reason for it, will find it helpful to give heed to the matter,

for in this division is involved the primary significance of the whole history of God's revelation to man.

The literal meaning of the term Testament—a document attested by seals, witnesses, or other legal certification—or, a document which disposes of property by the will of a testator—applies to the use of the word in connection with the Bible. The word Covenant, however, which may be employed, as the Revised Version uses it, as a synonym of Testament, brings out the fullest measure of meaning in the case, so that we may style these two grand divisions of the Bible the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The former is the record of Jehovah's ancient dealings with the Jewish people, and, through them, with the human race, whereby he bound himself with a solemn covenant, or series of covenants, or promises, on certain conditions to take into new fellowship with himself all who revere and obey him. The New Testament, or New Covenant, is the enlargement and fulfillment of the old promises, agreements, or compacts, in which the privileges and blessings of the gospel are assured to mankind through the work of Jesus Christ. In connection with this use of the term the Master's words, spoken in the institution of the Lord's Supper, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," is full of sacred suggestions.

Luke 22. 20

In the New Testament, now before us, we find (1) an Historical Section, made of the four Gospels and the book of Acts; (2) the Pauline Epistles, fourteen in number, in which the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews is included, for convenient enumeration;

(3) the seven General Epistles, of James, Peter, John, and Jude; and (4) a Book of Prophecy—the Revelation of John.

This New Testament record, covered by these books, reaching from the annunciation to Zacharias down to the completion of the last book, includes substantially the first century of the Christian era. When we take a broad and general view of the entire Bible as thus set before us in outline, and get a comprehensive idea of the structure and range of the whole Book, its majesty, and greatness, and terrific beauty begin to break upon us. The Book opens with the creation of the universe, and closes with the day of judgment!

The Scriptures are thus seen to comprehend, in this flashlight glance which we take at them, as though we were occupying one of the mountain peaks of eternity for our viewpoint, the whole story of time, from its beginning to its tragic close! That one feature of the Bible stamps it with a glory and a significance elsewhere not to be found. In this respect this Book is marked off from all other books in the world. This bird's-eye view of the contents of the Scripture, whereby we sweep the panoramic field of prophecy and history, of time and eternity, with a single glance, should give us pause. What other book was ever written to startle the imagination and transfix the soul with a sublime vision such as is thus afforded?

Fresh attractions—to take another step in the task of dealing with the structure of the Bible—will be

revealed when we undertake to analyze and outline the contents of a single individual portion of the volume, and thus proceed to study the Scriptures seriatim, a book at a time. To read the Bible from beginning to end is worth while, but those who thus deal with Scripture, without noting the plan and scope of each book in turn, miss much of the beauty enshrined therein. Sometimes the plan of an individual book constitutes one of its essential charms, and when that plan can be stated in a single sentence, lodged in the memory, and used from time to time in Bible study in connection with that particular part of Scripture, there is added a new delight to the work.

Take, for instance, the first book in the Bible and note how easily it almost opens itself for analysis to the inquiring reader. The Book of Beginnings it is, as indicated by its title, Genesis. For close analysis attention should be given to a phrase which is repeated at the beginning of a new section again and again; as, for example:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gen. | 2. | 4 | These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth. |
| | 5. | 1 | This is the book of the generations of Adam. |
| | 6. | 9 | These are the generations of Noah. |
| | 10. | 1 | These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. |
| | 11. | 27 | These are the generations of Terah [father of Abraham]. |
| | 25. | 12 | These are the generations of Ishmael. |
| | 25. | 19 | These are the generations of Isaac. |
| | 36. | 1 | These are the generations of Esau. |
| | 37. | 2 | These are the generations of Jacob. |

A Bible reader by simply underscoring these passages will thereby obtain at sight a helpful outline of the book.

A briefer plan, substantially correct, and easily held in mind, is that which allies the contents of the book of Genesis with the six chief characters mentioned in it—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. Accordingly, the contents may be tabulated thus:

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

- (1) Adam, Creation and Fall: Chapters 1 to 5.
- (2) Noah, the Deluge and Dispersion: Chapters 6 to 11.
- (3) Abraham: Chapters 12 to 25. 18.
- (4) Isaac: Chapters 25. 19 to 27. 46.
- (5) Jacob: Chapters 28 to 36.
- (6) Joseph: Chapters 37 to 50.

A simple outline, like the foregoing, is memorized without difficulty, and thus retained is of singular service.

Sometimes an outline becomes at the same time a description of the book. The case of the book of Joshua is in point. It has twenty-four chapters, one half of them being devoted to the subjugation, and the other half to the settlement, of the Promised Land. When the simple phrase thus suggested, changed slightly in form, is repeated again and again, it becomes unforgettable, and the book takes on its rightful significance as it brings before the mind, alliteratively as well as analytically, "the conquest and colonization of Canaan."

The Epistle to the Hebrews may be easily outlined in such a way as to make its contents stand out

in clearness, like a picture before the eye. The message of the epistle, which was written to show that the gospel is God's final and perfect revelation of grace to the world, may be thus summarized: Jesus Christ is greater than the prophets; greater than the angels; greater than Moses and Joshua; greater than Aaron and the Jewish priesthood; he is the fulfillment of Hebrew types and shadows, and his gospel is the final embodiment of divine mercy. The last three chapters recall great examples of faith, and urge parting counsels and practical lessons. This outline can be amplified, put into analytical form, and otherwise clarified; at each step of this process the student will find new beauties in the epistle. When after due study the contents of this noble portion of the New Testament are fully apprehended, they become a precious intellectual and religious inheritance for evermore.

The structural charms of the Bible, thus hinted at in the foregoing pages, can hardly be exhausted. Each separate book, analyzed and outlined, becomes a distinctive addition to one's intellectual possessions, and each one thus possessed increases the evident attractions of the Scriptures as a whole.

CHAPTER III
AN ELABORATED INSTANCE: PHILEMON

But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. —2 Tim. 3. 14-17.

How precious is the Book divine,
By inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.

O'er all the strait and narrow way
Its radiant beams are cast;
A light whose never-weary ray
Grows brightest at the last.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts
In this dark vale of tears;
Life, light, and joy it still imparts,
And quells our rising fears.

This lamp, through all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide our way,
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day.

—John Fawcett.

CHAPTER III

AN ELABORATED INSTANCE: PHILEMON

IN immediate relation with the attractions of the Bible which, as we have just been suggesting, are involved in its structure, an instance may be elaborated to advantage. By this specimen it may be shown that unsuspected beauties are sometimes lodged in the setting and environment of a book, and that there are parts of Scripture which may seem to have at first blush but little interest or value, but which when viewed in connection with the circumstances which gave them birth, and the immediate aim of the writer, are vested at once with a vividness and grace never to be forgotten. This principle may be illumined as well as instanced in the shortest epistle of the apostle Paul, a production which has but twenty-five verses, and which—without the help of the sidelights to be furnished by the historian who is acquainted with Paul's situation and purpose in writing this brief letter—seems to contain but little that is of practical or edifying import. The epistle, without its setting and framework, shows off to poor advantage—like a notable painting which requires to be suitably framed and hung in a proper light in order that its merits may be duly seen.

To this short letter, then, let us give attention, drawing upon the assured historic data connected

with Paul's later career in order to secure the side-lights for its illumination.

The apostle's opening words—"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus"—taken along with similar allusions in the Epistle to the Colossians, tell us that the production was written when the writer was in captivity in Rome. It belongs with the Epistles of the Imprisonment, which include Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, and Second Timothy—a notable category. This fact alone is significant. The apostle spent at least five years in captivity—in Cæsarea, in the hands of soldiers during the long and disastrous voyage and journey to Rome, and then in the Imperial City for two years or more. To all human seeming his usefulness was at an end. The little struggling Church, scattered here and there throughout Asia Minor and Greece, must have been smitten with dismay for the time being when they learned that their chief apostle and guide was a prisoner. And to the apostle himself the period of captivity must at first have been an inexplicable calamity. What was to become of his work? Who would instruct the converts? Who would direct his fellow missionaries? How could the "regions beyond" be evangelized if he, the leader-in-chief, was in the hands of his enemies in a Roman prison? Questions like these must have taxed and almost distracted him until he learned in whatsoever state he was therein to be content; until he found out that the afflictive and dreadful things that had happened to him—mob violence, shipwreck, hardships of many sorts, and long imprisonment—had

“fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel.” Phil. 1. 12

The prison ministry of the apostle, indeed, fraught though it was with suffering and privation and peril, turned out to be one of the most fruitful periods of his life. He wrote from prison, as we have already indicated, some of his most important epistles; he directed in Rome—like the commander-in-chief of an army from his headquarters far away from the actual field of conflict—the work of his fellow soldiers—Luke, Mark, Timothy, Aristarchus, Tychicus, Epaphras, and Onesimus, among others—sending them out into the city of Rome and into other fields, and hearing their reports when they returned to hold converse with him in his prison cell. He was in close touch with the choicest troops in the Roman army—the Pretorian Guard, who had charge of the prisoners held for trial in the Mamertine prison; and as the guards were changed several times a day the apostle had many opportunities for conversation, counsel, prayer with them. It thus occurred that he became known in the palace of Nero, and his work, his testimony, and his example exerted a strange leavening and quickening power among the soldiers and slaves who helped to make up “the household of Cæsar,” Phil. 1. 13 from whom greetings are sent to the converts at Philippi in a notable passage in the great epistle sent to that body. By this means the trophies won by Paul during his imprisonment grew to be many, and because of the vital relation of this work to the palace of the Cæsars, and to the officers and men of the Phil. 4. 22

Roman soldiery, this part of his career is of large import. Thus the situation of the apostle at the time when he wrote the short Epistle to Philemon, when graphically set forth, serves to throw light on the case at once.

The man to whom this letter was addressed and sent, Philemon, was a citizen of Colossæ, in Asia Minor, who had been converted, years before, during Paul's ministrations in that region, probably during that period recorded in Acts, chapter nineteen, in which the spread of the gospel from Ephesus, where the apostle had his home for the time being, through all the surrounding region, including Colossæ, is suggested. This man became a disciple of Christ through the personal influence of the apostle, and his home was opened to the ambassador who had brought him to the Redeemer. The converts in that city made this home their place of resort, fellowship, and worship, as indicated in the expression, "the church in thy house." That Philemon was a man of station, of wealth, and of a kindly, generous, and hospitable character is clearly made out when all the facts are put together. He was an owner of slaves, and concerning one of them—Onesimus by name—this Epistle to Philemon was written. This slave, it seems, had run away from his owner, after having stolen money, or in some other way, perhaps by embezzlement, had proved dishonest. He fled to Rome, and there sought to lose himself in the great metropolis. After he had been there for some weeks or months, sinking, probably, deeper and deeper in

degradation, he was brought in some way, not clearly indicated in the story, into personal contact with the imprisoned apostle. Exactly how this occurred no one can now tell; the most probable solution of the case is the supposition that the runaway slave after committing some offense in Rome was arrested and thrown into prison, where he made Paul's acquaintance. We are not stretching the probabilities of the situation when we opine that he was an inmate of the very cell where Paul was incarcerated, and that he was thus brought into the closest personal relationship with the apostle. The sequel, so far as concerns Paul's influence over this wretched creature—an outcast, a thief, a vagabond on the face of the earth—might be easily forecast. The circumstances are not detailed, but the great fact is clearly given in Paul's own testimony: this runaway slave became one of the trophies of Paul's prison ministry. He was converted and became one of the apostle's helpers and workers.

We may picture to ourselves, without transgressing the essential facts in the case, the situation when this ragged, filthy, and abject specimen of broken manhood, Onesimus, was cast into the cell where Paul was a prisoner. When the new inmate of the prison had sobered off from his debauch, and had recovered in some degree his right mind, the apostle began to inquire concerning his history. The man confessed his waywardness and faults and sins: he is a runaway slave; his master lives in Colossæ, Philemon by name—at which Paul's eyes glisten and his lip

trembles. That is a familiar name—that is a well-known city: had this man, this poor slave, lived in the home where he, the apostle, in former days had been a welcome guest? Further inquiry showed that this was even so. Here was the starting point for Paul's instructions, warnings, and compassionate appeals to the outcast, thus strangely brought into fellowship with him in prison. The slave had learned that the way of the transgressor is hard; he had experienced the pains and penalties of his wicked career; and he was seemingly ready to accept the offer of pardon and renewal which in the gospel proclaimed by Paul was freely made. There in the Mamertine prison the man was converted; he developed gifts and graces quickly under Paul's encouraging words and gracious example; when his time of imprisonment was up he joined himself to the company of Paul's fellow workers in the city, and for a time served as an evangelist and messenger.

Eph. 6. 21, 22
Col. 4. 7-9

Meanwhile two epistles were to be written, to the churches at Ephesus and at Colossæ respectively, and to this task Paul devoted himself. Tychicus, for a long time a companion and helper of the apostle, was commissioned to bear the letters to their destinations, as he was a native of that region. In connection with this prospective errand into Asia Minor a question arose in the apostle's mind concerning Onesimus, and the conclusion was speedily reached that the slave must return to his master. It is reasonable to suppose that the man himself had some questions to put in connection with this decision: "Am I still a

slave of Philemon? Are we now not brothers in Christ? Does this new religion allow a man to be held in bondage? Have I no new rights and privileges, now that I have given my heart and life to the Redeemer? What will my master do with me when I return? How can I repay him the money that I stole from him? What punishment will I meet when I face him?" Some of these questions Paul could answer offhand; others have only recently been solved, in part by the gradual growth of the conception of manhood, in part by the new vision of personal liberty afforded to the world in our own times, and in part by the dread arbitrament of the sword. It is clear, at any rate, that Paul deemed it his duty to return this runaway slave, now a converted man and a brother in Christ, to his master, Philemon, at Colossæ.

It requires no stretch of fancy to see the apostle and this converted slave conversing in regard to the new relationships made possible in the gospel between the master and his bondservants, under the Roman law, and if we listen closely we can almost hear Paul say to his companion and helper something like this:

"Brother Onesimus, you must return to your master, to Philemon, my friend and brother. I do not know how he will receive you, nor can I tell in advance what he will do in your case. But Tychicus is going to Colossæ with the Epistle to the Colossians which I have just written, and in it I have made personal reference to him and you, so that our disciples in that city will know that I have confidence in you. This is what I have said:

Col. 4. 7-9.

“All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord: whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our estate, and that he may comfort your hearts; together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things that are done here.

“And now in addition I have written to your master, Philemon, a letter which you are to take to him. You are to give it into his hands yourself. Read it over before you go, and you will understand what sort of an appeal I have made to him. And to you, before you go, I want to say only this further word. Trust yourself to the brotherly kindness of your master, but remember that under the laws of the Roman empire you are his servant, and he must determine what is to be your new relationship. I have gone as far as I can with tact and sympathy to suggest what perhaps he might do, but I can go no further. Make no complaint; keep up your courage; accept whatever comes to you in the spirit of fortitude; and whatever your lot and labor may be, act as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Good-by; you have been a help and a comfort to me in my imprisonment. I have indicated to your master that when I am by and by set free I hope to make a visit to him in Colossæ; in that case we may meet again; if not there I shall meet you one of these days in the city that hath foundations. God bless you!”

In that final interview between Paul and Onesimus something like the foregoing conversation must have taken place, and at least the substance of it must

have been spoken to the man thus returned to his master in Colossæ.

Now we are ready to read and apprehend this Epistle to Philemon. Paraphrased, and put into modern English, the letter substantially would read as follows:

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ in Rome, to Philemon, our beloved fellow worker: I have heard again and again of your kindness and hospitality through these years since I was at your house. The news has comforted and cheered me many times, and when I pray I have you and your needs in mind. May God give you grace and peace!

I write this letter, not to command from you a service, but to give you the chance to do a good turn of your own accord. I write to beseech you in behalf of Onesimus, your slave, who has been converted under my influence here in Rome, and who—once unprofitable to you—now returns to you, your servant, but much more, a brother man and a brother in Christ—and who bears this letter from me to you. He has been so helpful to me that I greatly desired to retain him here as my fellow worker—it almost tears my heart out to send him away; but I did not dare to keep him here without your consent, and so he goes back to you. Perhaps he was allowed to go from you for a while so that you might get him back a converted man, a brother beloved. Receive him as you would receive me, should I be able to come. Indeed, I expect to be your guest when I get out of prison; have a room ready for me when I come!

Note this—I write it down with my own hand: If Onesimus owes you anything, charge it to me. I will pay it every penny. I say this, even though I might perhaps remind you that you owe me your own salvation. Think this over, and do whatever the Lord prompts you to do in the case of this dear brother, whom I now return to you.

I have such confidence in your generous kindness that I believe you will do even more and better for him than I have dared to hint.

My fellow workers salute you. Grace be with you. Amen.

Now, with this preliminary matter, which serves to illumine the background as well as the foreground

of this singularly interesting and touching story, let the reader turn to the epistle itself, as found in the Revised Version, and read it over. Rather, for the sake of convenience, let the whole epistle—for it is, as we now know, very brief—be here reproduced, so that the picture and its frame may be fittingly joined, and so that, illumined by these sidelights, this exquisitely tactful, gracious, and manly letter of Paul to Philemon may speak for itself—as a single illustration of the beautiful things to be found in the Bible.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints; that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ. For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who was aforesaid unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say. But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

CHAPTER IV
A MANIFOLD BOOK

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth,
but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou
mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein:
for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou
shalt have good success.

—Josh. 1. 8.

The words of the Lord are pure words;
As silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.

—Psa. 12. 6.

I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings,
And shall not be put to shame.

I have seen an end of all perfection;
But thy commandment is exceeding broad.

—Psa. 119. 46, 96.

Lord, thy Word abideth,
And our footsteps guideth;
Who its truth believeth,
Light and joy receiveth.

When our foes are near us,
Then thy Word doth cheer us;
Word of consolation,
Message of salvation.

When the storms are o'er us,
And dark clouds before us,
Then its light directeth,
And our way protecteth.

Word of mercy, giving
Succor to the living;
Word of life, supplying
Comfort to the dying!

Oh, that we, discerning
Its most holy learning,
Lord, may love and fear thee,
Evermore be near thee!

—Sir H. W. Baker.

CHAPTER IV

A MANIFOLD BOOK

HE who reads the Scriptures as if they were all on the same plane of beauty, authority, importance, and edifying ministry thereby misses some of their chief charms. Even the laws of the Word are not all of the same quality, for we have the authority of the Master himself as to the first and greatest commandment, and the second which is like unto it; and he condemns severely those who have "left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith." Saint Paul indicates four functions of Scripture inspired of God, but he surely did not mean that every verse, paragraph, or chapter of the whole volume is charged with all these properties. The good sense of most students of the Bible leads them in the exercise of a sober discriminating faculty to discern the fact that the Bible is a manifold book, that its contents are of various values, and that this manifoldness contributes greatly to its charms. The volume would lose some of its attractiveness, to say nothing of its edifying helpfulness, were it all on the same grade of quality. All kinds of fanaticism and folly have arisen from neglect of the truth that the Bible is a book of diversities, its different parts having different qualities and grades of importance. It has taken the world a long time to find out what should

Matt. 22. 34-
39
Matt. 23. 23
2 Tim. 3. 16, 17

have been perceived from the start—that the Bible does not run along on a dead level of monotonous utterance and teaching, all of them equally interesting, notable, and important. Once quotations were made almost at random from all parts of Scripture in sermons and in doctrinal discussions, and in the task of building up systems of theology—it being deemed sufficient for the purpose in hand to be able to cite the chapter and verse where “the Bible says so.” That method of Bible study and Bible teaching, happily for all of us, is coming to an end. Intelligent people have come to see that other phases of the case must be inquired into now in order to determine the meaning and validity of the sayings of the Word, such as: “Where does the Bible say this? Who is represented as saying it? Under what circumstances was it said, and for what intent? How was it at first understood? Is it plain prose or is it a figure of speech? Is it the moody, skeptical, pessimistic plaint of a man who finds, as does the writer of Ecclesiastes, nothing good or hopeful under the sun, or is it the outcry of a man, like Job, distracted and bewildered with his losses and sufferings, or is it clearly the admonition and command of a prophet or apostle sent by the Almighty to declare a message?” Questions like these, shrewdly asked, will illumine many a dark place in Scripture, and at the same time help to bring out gleams of beauty hidden from ordinary vision.

The diligent reader of the Bible soon learns for himself that while each portion of the Book may have its own value and its own structure, there are certain

portions which literally overflow with light, and comfort, and strengthening grace,—such as the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel of Luke, many of the Psalms, certain chapters in Isaiah, and some of Paul's writings. Here we have the central portion, the throbbing heart of the Scripture, but to read it through without weighing and testing the various parts, without comparing their teachings one with another, and without learning to discern the amazing variety and the radical differences of style and purpose and helpfulness which abound in them, is a wasteful and an unedifying piece of business.

It is greatly to our advantage that the Book has these diversities; we should be grateful that God has made it possible for us by means of them now to wander on sunny slopes, and now to walk through grassy glades; now to pluck fruit from luxuriant orchards, and again to explore mysterious caverns, and once in a while to ascend a mountain peak and thence get a glimpse of vast expanses of beauty, and nearer visions of the sky; to-day to refresh ourselves in cool and shady nooks from neverfailing springs, and to-morrow dig deep into some murky mine and bring out from its recesses gems of priceless value. Exercising discernment in reading the Word, the reader finds that there are certain portions to which he instinctively turns when in anxiety, in doubt, in temptation, in sorrow, in trial. He realizes that these inner and essential features of the Bible are the *liber in libro*, the Book within the book, and that these are the substantial things of revelation—such as the

promises of God; the moral law, with its ever clarifying standards of ethics; the patterns of devotion and courage and faith which abound; and the perfect character of our Lord as set forth in the Gospels. These varying qualities of the Scriptures not only carry with them a self-evidencing quality which, rightly apprehended, makes the Bible its own best witness to its authority, truthfulness, and power, but also constitute innumerable contributions to the list of charms which this volume embodies.

Growing out of this singular variety of the contents of Scripture we find a diversity of utterance, a multiplicity of literary method, and an omniformity of style which transcend enumeration and description. It is hardly too much to say that nearly all manner of writings and writers are found in the Bible—except specimens of the frivolous or comic. Indeed, styles, rather than style, the plural rather than the singular, is the term that needs to be used in the effort to define the literary attractions of the Bible. These attractions alone demand a volume instead of a chapter for their adequate delineation. Although they have challenged and received an attention, age after age, which is now proverbial from the masters of style, and although they have exercised a vitalizing ministry in the growth of our language, from its primitive beginnings through all its progress in the creation of that magnificent heritage which we call English literature, yet the field is still virgin soil in which each new generation finds fresh and hitherto unreckoned treasures.

The variety of aim, authorship, environment, and subject embodied in the different books of the Bible, as well as the long period, variously estimated at from a thousand to fourteen hundred years, during which the process of composition, collaboration, editing, and unification into a single volume went on, are circumstances which suggest the historic groundwork of the various literary qualities which we find in the Word. Picturesque outlines of the beginnings of things, in the morning of time; an account of the origin of the race, and of the emergence and growth of sin in the world; sketches of heroic personalities—now elaborate, and now terse and brief, mere thumbnail portraits, as it were—and narratives of their struggles, adventures, sorrows, failures, sins, and victories; songs and prayers which touch every chord in the human heart, and sweep the whole gamut of the experience of the race; messages spoken by anointed messengers of God to kings and nations, in times of peril and transgression and calamity; wise maxims, keen proverbial utterances—the wisdom of the many crystallized into current intellectual coin for all time by the wit of a few—dramas of suffering and of joy; a biography, fourfold in form, that stands alone in its absolute perfection of plan, detail, and moving force, and in its fadeless and stainless beauty; letters to endangered converts and inchoate churches and bodies of people just gathered out of idolatry, and assailed by temptations and woes which, however peculiar to their time, were yet universal in their essential nature, and which repeat their allurements and

specious phases of iniquity in various guises in every age since that early day of trial and martyrdom; mysterious imagery, startling visions, detailed directions concerning forms of worship—here we have, in a single far-ranging sentence, at least a suggestion covering the different sorts of writings to be found in the Bible.

Further, every one of these themes has its own apt and adequate style, its own form of literary expression, its own figures of speech, or, as circumstances demanded, its own plain and direct and unadorned quaintness of utterance, its own verbal and rhetorical embodiment. When we gather into one view these various qualities of style, what an amazing variety, what an extraordinary combination, we have set before our vision! The greatness of the Most High, the majesty and the meanness of man, the power of the human heart to rejoice, to suffer, and to triumph, the magnificence of the mountains and the sea, the largeness of God's mercy, and the beauty of Him who was "fairer than the children of men," and altogether lovely—these and a thousand other themes which transcend description, are enshrined in Scripture in words and sentences and paragraphs which, after having passed the scrutiny of the ages, have won unstinted admiration from the most penetrating judgments, and, according to the determination of the centuries, remain the most perfect utterances in all literature. Surely those who are seeking the highest standard of literary work in the world will find it embodied in many places in the English Bible.

The tribute recorded by the revisers of the Bible, in the version issued in 1881-85, is, in connection with this phase of the case, worth citing, as it comes from experts who had devoted years of painstaking labor to the work committed to their hands:

We have had to study this great version carefully and minutely, line by line; and the longer we have been engaged upon it the more we have learned to admire its simplicity, its dignity, its power, its happy turns of expression, its general accuracy, and, we must not fail to add, the music of its cadences and the felicities of its rhythm. To render a work that had reached this high standard of excellence still more excellent, to increase its fidelity without destroying its charm, was the task committed to us.

A still more recent tribute, which in view of its source and spirit is remarkable, appears in the daily press dispatches while this chapter is being written—a statement from the committee representing the Jewish Publication Society of America, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the two bodies embracing, collectively and typically, the Hebrew scholarship of the twentieth century. Under the auspices of these two organizations a new version of the Old Testament is being made. It is to be, according to their statement, “a mere revision” of the two former versions, the “Authorized” of 1611 and the “Revised” of 1885. Of the former version they say:

In the case of the older English version it is well known how it has become an English classic, part and parcel of the great English literature; its phraseology has entered the very English language and cannot be severed therefrom with impunity. Hence it is that the new translation will not attempt to discard familiar phrases unless in the judgment of the editors they fail to do justice to the Hebrew original.


Even in such cases the familiar renderings will be recorded in the margin.

Nor will there be any attempt at modernizing the diction. Biblical English has a ring and a force which up to date language cannot equal. The quaintness of the English Bible is a charm that must not be sacrificed to an exaggerated desire for intelligibility. The errors of translation must at all hazards be corrected; absolutely unintelligible or misleading words must be discarded, but care must be taken to preserve the beauty of the biblical English, for the English Bible as a classic is dear to all English-speaking men, Jews or Christians.

The preciousness of this inheritance which we possess in our English Bible may be emphasized when we recall the fact that it now represents more than five centuries of scholastic toil, devoted to it in the effort to clarify and perfect each successive version that has been made since Wycliffe's first translation of the whole Bible into English was given to the world in 1384, A. D. Our English Bible is enriched with martyr blood, shed in order to purchase the right to translate, read, and circulate it, and it has been inwrought into the very life of our English language and literature so deeply that if it were possible to take away the elements which it has contributed to our dictionaries, our poetry, and our chief standards they would be left in rags and tatters.

The literary excellence of the Scriptures as embodied in our familiar versions has received new prominence within the past decade or two by the emphasis which has been put upon the Bible as Literature, to cite the suggestive title of a volume issued a dozen years ago, containing articles by twenty-one notable scholars, such as Lyman Abbott, Henry van Dyke, Marvin R.

Vincent, and Milton S. Terry. Professor R. G. Moulton, one of the joint authors of the book, has prepared an edition of the Books of the Bible, the typographical arrangement of which, and also the fresh analyses and discerning notes which he has supplied, make up a distinctive contribution to the apparatus of the reader who would become acquainted with the charms of the Scripture. Further, the typographical arrangement of the Revised Version—especially the printing of the Psalms and other portions of the Old Testament as poetry, and the indication of citations from various parts of Scripture as such on the page, have helped to make the volume almost a new book in its revelation of significance and beauty. In addition there are a dozen other recent versions—the Century Bible, the Twentieth Century New Testament, the Temple, the Cambridge, and the Westminster Bibles, and others of a character all their own, each of which serves to bring out attractive phases of the Word hitherto not stressed in any former edition. The fresh facilities for biblical study, the wealth of expository knowledge, and the new revelations of the beauty and worth of our Scriptures which are thus set before us are so many and so important that they may well be styled a distinguishing feature of our age. No other generation ever had such invaluable treasures put within reach in this regard as those which we possess. And each one enhances the attractions of the Book, which grow in number and in beauty, decade by decade.



CHAPTER V
LITERARY TRAITS

The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words;
And that which was written was upright,
Even words of truth.
The words of the wise are as goads,
And as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.
—Eccl. 12. 10, 11.

Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read:
No one of these shall fail,
None shall want her mate;
For my mouth it hath commanded,
And his spirit it hath gathered them.
The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:
But the word of our God shall stand for ever.
—Isa. 34. 16; 40. 8.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;
teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and
hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts
unto God.

—Col. 3. 16.

This Book, this holy Book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamped
From first to last; this ray of sacred light,
This lamp from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;
And evermore beseeching men with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.
—Robert Pollok.

CHAPTER V

LITERARY TRAITS

THERE are certain rhetorical features of the Bible which have put it in the foreground of the world's attention, and have kept it there for ages in undisputed literary supremacy. A few of these may now be indicated, in brief, and yet in some detail, and with illustrative citations.

Some men, among those whose writings are found in the Bible, deal with the grandest themes, and move on the very highest plane of thought and expression. It is difficult to represent their work fitly without using superlative terms. These writers were first of all men of unrivaled genius; then they had a passion for God and an aptitude for religious truth, and an insight into its meaning and worth which made them a class by themselves; they had extraordinary literary gifts; and in addition we are told that these men "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Pet. 1. 21

With such varied qualifications, it is no wonder that their writings in certain respects are of surpassing rank.

1. The sublimity of certain passages in Scripture is a quality which stands foremost on many pages. What, for instance, can the literature of the world present to match the opening verses of Genesis? No matter what interpretation may be put upon the chapter

from which the verses are taken, it can scarcely be debated that the ineffable magnificence of the theme finds fit embodiment in these majestic words:

Gen. 1. 1-5

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Of like scope and magnificence are the opening verses of the Gospel according to John:

John 1. 1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

How noble and adequate, also, are the words of the psalmist in which he symmetrizes his lofty conceptions of the power of Jehovah, with his grateful acknowledgment of the condescension of the Most High:

Psa. 147. 1-9

Praise ye the Lord;
 For it is good to sing praises unto our God;
 For it is pleasant, and praise is comely.
 The Lord doth build up Jerusalem;
 He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
 He healeth the broken in heart,
 And bindeth up their wounds.
 He telleth the number of the stars;
 He giveth them all their names.
 Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;
 His understanding is infinite.
 The Lord upholdeth the meek;

He bringeth the wicked down to the ground.
 Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving;
 Sing praises upon the harp unto our God:
 Who covereth the heavens with clouds.
 Who prepareth rain for the earth,
 Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
 He giveth to the beast his food,
 And to the young ravens which cry.

Other illustrative citations embodying this quality may recur when we take up specifically the topic of Hebrew Poetry.

2. The yearning, human tenderness of the Bible is a phase not to be ignored. Such utterances as the following form an essential part of the Book, and they make up an unspeakably precious element in the Christian's heritage of grace and truth:

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. Isa. 66. 13
 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Psa. 103. 13

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee. Isa. 54. 10

And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Exod. 3. 7, 8

3. Chapters 42-45 in the Book of Genesis are overflowing with another element vitally affiliated with that which has just been noted—namely, the quality of pathos.

Those who can read that inimitable story of Joseph as he deals with his brothers in Egypt, and finally reveals himself to them, and sends for his father to

come down from Canaan—without being deeply moved with the emotions which perennially throb and stir in the narrative even after the lapse of thirty-five centuries, must be apathetic indeed.

There are throughout the Scripture record cries of anguish, wailings of despair, sobs of inexpressible grief, which come to us across the ages, repeated to us as though the Bible were a phonograph, endowed with the power to repeat even the tones of the voice and the choking utterances of the heartbroken of ancient centuries which are contained in this most human of books. What a notable case is that, for example, which the historian gives in his revelation of King David's appalling agony when he hears of the death of the revolting Prince Absalom:

2 Sam. 18. 33

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

We scarcely need Longfellow's lines to make this scene and its lessons more vivid than this single citation from Scripture makes it:

There is no far nor near,
 There is neither there nor here,
 There is neither soon nor late
 In that Chamber over the Gate,
 Nor any long ago
 To that cry of human woe,—
 O Absalom, my son!

Some of the appeals which Jehovah puts into the mouths of his prophetic messengers overflow with pathetic tenderness, while the words of our Lord

again and again are surcharged with it. Two or three instances must suffice:

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together! Hos. 11. 8

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? Isa. 5. 3, 4

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Matt. 23. 37

Thus throughout the Scriptures God seeks access to us by incidents and utterances which aim at the most sensitive regions of the soul, in the effort to reclaim us from our wanderings and bring us back to our home. This feature of the Book may be reckoned one of its chief elements of power—the appeals which it continually makes to the sympathies, yearnings, soul-hunger, and tender emotional capacities which are lodged in the universal heart of man.

4. The singular skill, the searching and awakening force and penetrating power revealed in the questioning methods of the Bible need to be noted in any faithful attempt to delineate the elements of attraction in its literary style. The questions which are put into the mouth of the Almighty in the opening chapters of Genesis afford specimens of the quickening and wakening ministry of well-directed inquiries when aimed at the detection of transgressors, the alarming of the conscience, and the exposure of sin. How

terrific are these arousing questions, which are supposed to sound in the ear of the first man, cowering in guilty dread, smitten with premonitions of doom, in the garden of Eden:

Gen. 3. 9, 11, 13 Where art thou? . . . Who told thee that thou wast naked? . . . Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? . . . What is this thou hast done?

In like manner the arraignment of Cain incorporates the same principle, the same relentless and unescapable method:

Gen. 4. 6, 9, 10 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? . . . Where is Abel thy brother? . . . What hast thou done?

How tender the question addressed to the heart-broken Hagar, in the desert, famishing for water, and expecting that she and Ishmael were surely doomed to perish of thirst and heat—the question which opened to her a chance to breathe out her cry of want and grief into the ear of heaven, and which assured her that sympathy and help were available in her extremity of need:

Gen. 21. 17 What aileth thee, Hagar?

How full of both gentle rebuke and of sympathetic encouragement is the inquiry addressed to the great prophet of Israel, when he had fled from the threats of Jezebel and in despondence and loneliness was hiding in the cave at Sinai:

1 Kings 19. 9 What doest thou here, Elijah?

The function which the interrogative method serves in turning the gaze of the transgressor in upon his

own life, and thus inducing him to sit in judgment and condemnation upon his sins, is abundantly illustrated throughout the books of the Hebrew prophets, who knew well how to thrust a sharp question into the very quick in the warnings and appeals which they delivered. A few instances, cited almost at random, may be suggested:

And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will you leave your glory? Isa. 10. 3

Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush. Jer. 6. 15

Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? 8. 22

Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Ezek. 33. 11

It is in the New Testament, however, that we find the fullest exhibition of the scope and power of the interrogative form of speech, as it is employed by our Lord and by Saint Paul. It would require many pages to cite all the questions used by them, and to make brief comments upon them in the case. The great Teacher, of whom in his early boyhood it is recorded that in the temple at Jerusalem he was found among the doctors, "both hearing them, and asking them questions," revealed higher qualities in the use of the interrogation point than even that ancient Greek philosopher whose fame is linked with the Socratic method which he first established at Athens. The Master questioned men for purposes of awakening, of rebuke, of encouragement, and in his ministry left on record scores and scores of questions which embody his knowledge of the human

Luke 2. 46

heart and of the science of teaching. Without any effort to organize these inquiries, it may serve our purpose merely to cite a few as typical of his method:

Matt. 7. 16	Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
8. 26	Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?
9. 28	Believe ye that I am able to do this?
13. 51	Have ye understood all these things?
16. 13	Who do men say that the Son of man is?
20. 6	Why stand ye here all the day idle?
22. 20	Whose is this image and superscription?
22. 42	What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?
Mark 11. 30	The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?
Luke 10. 26	What is written in the law? how readest thou?
Mark 8. 36	What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Remarkable specimens of the interrogative method as employed by Saint Paul, especially in his argumentative writings, may be found in the second and third chapters of Romans.

Those who will reflect on the singular facility with which a shrewd question—which Bacon said is the half of knowledge—fastens itself in the memory, arouses the soul from dormancy, and sometimes puts every faculty on the *qui vive*, can scarcely ignore the attractive, holding, and searching function of this element in the Bible, which compels attention, awakens conscience, quickens thought, and often pierces the soul to its deepest recesses by its matchless interrogatory forms of speech.

5. Another feature in the style of the biblical chroniclers which takes strong hold of the casual reader as well as the critical student is the quaint, straightforward, and picturesque simplicity of their writings. Some of the men who helped to put the Old Testa-

ment into its present form were fascinating storytellers, using that term in its very highest sense. The noblest arts which have from earliest times made the Orient famous in this regard find their highest embodiment in Scripture. Certain of the elements of their style, as viewed in connection with this characteristic of their productions, are not easily defined, but a little study reveals other phases of enduring interest and attractiveness which are vivified in their narratives. The use of the archaic phrase, "And it came to pass"; the skillful massing of circumstantial details, done with graphic power; and the employment of such distinctive expressions as the following:

He lifted up his voice and wept—his sickness was sore—in his days and in his son's days—they returned every man to his house in peace—under his own vine and figtree—no rest for the sole of her foot—yet other seven days—to thee and to thy seed after thee—he did solemnly protest—his life is bound up in the lad's life—fell on his neck and wept—a very great and sore lamentation—man child—man of God—comely—goodly—divers weights and measures—avouched—

and many other strong, commanding, old-fashioned terms—these are features of these ancient writings which are significant and characteristic as suggesting some of the secrets of their fascinating method. In addition it will be seen, with a little examination, that the Hebrew narrators make a sparing use of adjectives and descriptive epithets, while they constantly bring the noun and the verb into the foreground, putting stress upon them and employing them often without any qualifying phrases, while there are still other qualities in their style which are elusive and subtle,

and which almost defy analysis. Whether one can penetrate, however, into the secrets of their literary art, or not, it is evident that these old chroniclers composed their narratives after a method which has made them models of effectiveness for all time.

Let the following brief quotation be scrutinized, and it will be found to contain some of the most striking traits of the skill of the Hebrew story-writers. Not a word can be changed to advantage; each term adds force and finish to the narrative, and the whole stands out like a picture drawn upon canvas:

Josh. 9. 3-6

But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they also did work wilyly, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-skins, old and rent and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and was become moldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We are come from a far country: now therefore make ye a covenant with us.

The whole Book of Ruth is an illustration of the felicitous style of those who wrote the historic books of the Old Testament—an idyllic prose poem, whose beauty is never-fading.

2 Sam. 12. 1-
15

The account of the interview of Nathan with David is a piece of exquisite work. Other qualities in addition to that of direct simplicity are here embodied—tragic power, dramatic action, descriptive finish—indeed, the skill of the story-teller here reaches its climax.

The work of the four evangelists in respect to the quality of direct and unadorned narration marks off

these portions of Scripture from all other documents in the world. The authors of the Gospels tell the story of the earthly life and ministry of the Saviour of the world; but they hardly ever stop to make a comment, or insert an adjective, or use a single qualifying term. Incidents the greatness and the significance of which must baffle even angelic intelligences, words which remain for all time and all eternity the final expression of the will of the Father in heaven, and the unfolding of the way of salvation for the human race, and at the last the sorrows and death and resurrection of the Redeemer—all these are simply told—not described, or pictured, or expounded, or elaborated—with an elimination of all personal elements in the witness and narrator, with a self-restraint, a poise, an unadorned simplicity of statement, and an absence of comment which silence us in a spell of speechless amazement when we come to study the history, and note this quality in the historians. In comparison with the so-called graphic descriptions which have been given in the pulpit, and in contrast with the efforts of the various biographers of our Lord in dealing with the crucifixion, what a piece of narration is this:

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the palace, and gathered unto him the whole band. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

Matt. 27. 27-
31

The nakedness of the style in the bare, unclad story of the evangelist seems to befit Him from whose body the seamless robe was stripped before he was nailed to the cross.

C

6. The symbolism of the biblical writers deserves a chapter instead of a paragraph. That the Orientals in their languages and literature abound in imagery, that they see the truth not in logical array but in pictures, that they are given not to argument or mathematical statements but to allegories and parables and various figures of speech, is as true to-day as it was in the olden time. Thus the Book, written by Orientals, makes its appeal to children, to lovers of poetical and dramatic beauty, and to all who are moved by rhetorical symbolism. From this quality comes the power which this volume has over the imagination in its portrayals of truth in the form of glowing and sometimes terrible imagery.

Page after page might well be occupied with illustrative citations instancing the variety and the splendor of these symbolic utterances. A few must suffice, but it will be an interesting task for any Bible student to copy out and arrange typical passages for himself. The dying utterance of the patriarch Jacob, for example, is full of characteristic symbolism:

Gen. 49. 3, 4,
9, 11, 12

Reuben, thou art my firstborn: . . .
Boiling over as water, thou shalt not have the preëminence.
Judah is a lion's whelp.
Binding his foal unto the vine,
And his ass's colt unto the choice vine;
He hath washed his garments in wine,

And his vesture in the blood of grapes:
His eyes shall be red with wine,
And his teeth white with milk.

The Psalms are overflowing with imagery employed to make vivid the character and attributes of Jehovah, such as may be found in the following:

The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; Psa. 18. 2, 28,
My God, my strong rock, in him will I take refuge; 29, 33-35
My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.

For thou wilt light my lamp:
The Lord my God will lighten my darkness.
For by thee I run upon a troop;
And by my God do I leap over a wall.

He maketh my feet like hinds' feet:
And setteth me upon my high places.
He teacheth my hands to war;
So that mine arms do bend a bow of brass.
Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:
And thy right hand hath holden me up,
And thy gentleness hath made me great.

The biblical symbols suggesting the brevity of life, and the beauty of a long and well-spent career, are many. From the multitude we may cite these:

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle. Job 7. 6

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up. Psa. 90. 5, 6
In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: 92. 12-14
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon;
Those that be planted in the house of the Lord
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, Job 5. 26
Like as a shock of grain cometh in in its season.

A single practical suggestion in connection with this enticing topic may be of service to beginners in

Bible study, as well, perhaps, as to others: Two faults must be guarded against in the task of interpreting figurative passages in Scripture—(1) do not construe them as if they were plain prose; and (2) do not crowd and strain the symbols of Scripture to their utmost limit in the endeavor to press out of them the last bit of juice, as though they were grapes in the wine press.

The messages of the prophets abound in metaphors, similes, and other symbols, and the words of our Lord—as we shall have occasion to note later—are often couched in parables. This figurative manner of speech serves to pique curiosity, move the imagination, appeal to the emotions, and aid the memory, and it thus becomes a distinctive feature of the attractive power of the Word.

F

CHAPTER VI

THE POETRY OF SCRIPTURE: ITS FORMS

O Lord, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all:
The earth is full of thy riches.
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
Both small and great beasts.
There go the ships;
There is leviathan, whom thou hast formed to take his pas-
time therein.
These wait all upon thee,
That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.
That thou givest unto them they gather;
Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good.
Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled;
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created;
And thou renewest the face of the ground.
Let the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
Let the Lord rejoice in his works.

—Psa. 104. 24–31.

O Word of God, incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky;
We praise thee for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

It floateth like a banner
Before God's host unfurled;
It shineth like a beacon
Above the darkling world.
It is the chart and compass
That o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists and rocks and quicksands,
Still guides, O Christ, to thee.

—William Walsham How.

CHAPTER VI

THE POETRY OF SCRIPTURE: ITS FORMS

MUCH more of the Old Testament is occupied by poetical contents than the ordinary Bible reader is aware of, for most of the books of the Prophets are poetical in form as well as in their literary style. The five poetical books, already enumerated—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs—when printed as they are in the Revised Version, are at first sight seen to be of that order. Bishop Lowth, in his version of Isaiah, and Dr. Moulton in his edition of the Prophetical Books, as well as other writers, have shown that there is thoroughly good reason for printing these books in the like manner. When thus set before the eye they have a new beauty and a fresh meaning.

The modern typographical setting in which these books are or may be presented indicates at a glance the distinctive feature of Hebrew poetry, as to its structure—namely, the system of parallelism. As compared with English forms of verse even a child can note the difference between biblical and other poetry. In Hebrew poetry there is no rhythm, such as is revealed in the musical lines from Byron:

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold.

In Hebrew verse there is no rhyme—a feature which often adds melody to our versified lines; there is no meter, such as characterizes English blank verse, as in the following from one of Bickersteth's productions:

God's oracles grew luminous as he spake;
And all along the ages good from ill
And light from darkness sprang, as day from night.
The first faint dawn from ruined Eden rose,
And glimmered round the solitary ark,
And lighted up Moriah's sacrifice,
And shed its warmth on Jacob's dying couch,
And bathed the bloodstained mercy seat with love.

When we say that these elements, meter and rhyme, are lacking from Hebrew poetry we are not unmindful that some great scholars are still at work in Germany and in this country trying to work out the theory that both these features occur in the Old Testament originals; thus far, however, they have not established their contention. At any rate, the matter is not essential to our discussion, for the distinctive fact of Hebrew parallelism as the chief phase in the form of biblical poetry still remains in either case without question.

There are three chief forms of Hebrew poetry, which we may briefly instance here: (a) the Synonymous, (b) the Antithetic, and (c) the Synthetic.

(a) In the simplest form of Hebrew poetry the writer puts his message into two lines, the second being simply a continuation or an enlargement of the idea in the first, or perhaps only a repetition of the first in a slightly different phraseology. Thus the second

line may be almost an echo of the first. The following citations are illustrations of this form:

I am become a stranger unto my brethren, And an alien unto my mother's children.	Psa. 69. 8
We are become a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and derision to those that are round about us.	79. 4
Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears, And given them tears to drink in large measure.	80. 5

Occasionally this sort of synonymous parallelism is extended into three lines, and sometimes these triplets are made to follow in a series:

For it is a statute for Israel, An ordinance of the God of Jacob; He appointed it in Joseph for a testimony.	Psa. 81. 4, 5
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The third chapter of Job contains a majestic instance of this kind of structure, which is styled the synonymous or cognate form.

(*b*) A second phase of Hebrew parallelism is the antithetic, in which the second line brings out a contrast, or antithesis, which stands sharply over against the utterance of the first. In Proverbs we have a host of such utterances:

The righteous shall never be removed: But the wicked shall not dwell in the land.	Prov. 10. 30
The lip of truth shall be established forever: But a lying tongue is but for a moment.	12. 19
Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise: But the companion of fools shall smart for it.	13. 20
Better is little with the fear of Jehovah, Than great treasure and trouble therewith.	15. 16

(*c*) Another form of biblical poetry—the constructive, or synthetic—is found, in which the successive

lines after the first furnish neither a repetition of, nor a contrast to, the opening utterance, but rather indicate a supplemental or completing addition. This form sometimes contains three, four, or more members, instead of the simple couplets or triplets as in the phases just noted. A fine instance of this occurs as follows, where a single thought is turned over and over again, with beautiful variations:

Psa. 78. 1-8

Give ear, O my people, to my law:
 Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
 I will open my mouth in a parable;
 I will utter dark sayings of old:
 Which we have heard and known,
 And our fathers have told us.
 We will not hide them from their children,
 Telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord,
 And his strength, and his wondrous works that he hath done
 For he established a testimony in Jacob,
 And appointed a law in Israel,
 Which he commanded our fathers,
 That they should make them known to their children:
 That the generation to come might know them, even the
 children which should be born;
 Who should arise and tell them to their children:
 That they might set their hope in God,
 And not forget the works of God,
 But keep his commandments:
 And might not be as their fathers,
 A stubborn and rebellious generation;
 A generation that set not their heart aright,
 And whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

There are other forms of poetry that may be noted in the Bible, but they do not differ much from those we have outlined; indeed, they are mere modifications of the three which have just been studied, and they occur so seldom that it is hardly worth while now to do more than mention them. A glance, however,

may be taken at the alphabetical, or acrostical, variety as embodied, for example, in the book of Lamentations. Chapters one, two, and four of that book have twenty-two verses each—the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet; and in the Hebrew the verses follow the order of those letters, the first one having as its initial letter Aleph, the second Beth, and so on to the end. The 119th Psalm is another specimen of a like arrangement. There are in that production twenty-two sections of eight verses each. The first section has Aleph for the initial letter of each verse; the second section opens in the case of each verse with Beth; and so on through the Psalm. In the English version these sections are simply headed with the Hebrew letter, as it is not possible to reproduce the acrostical system as to the verses in our language edifyingly. This whole psalm, it may be noticed by any reader, is occupied with tributes to the Bible, which is brought to our attention under a variety of titles—such as the law, the testimonies, the precepts, the commandments, the word, the ordinances of Jehovah. It is amazing that in these alphabetical arrangements there is no sign of artificiality in the thought or utterance. The poet does not seem to have been hindered in any way, in uttering his message, by the necessity of working out his acrostical design.

We have already noted the fact that the Minor Prophetic Books are just as really poetical in their form and structure as the Psalms, and that when attention is paid to this phase of them in printing

these parts of the Bible new beauty is revealed in them. With a little study almost any discerning reader of these books may indicate for himself this characteristic. The book of Isaiah, with the exception of a few historic portions (chiefly found in chapters 37-39), is a great series of prophetic poems, spoken at various times and bearing on different themes. Bishop Lowth, who was the discoverer, we might say, of the poetical structure of much of the Old Testament, made a new translation of Isaiah a century and a half ago which was published in metrical form, and which became a monumental work largely in view of that aspect of it. A few lines may be cited from it to indicate, in contrast with the ordinary version, what a difference the metrical printing of these portions of the Bible makes. First look at three verses as printed in the Revised Version, as plain prose:

Isa. 43. 1-3

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy saviour.

Now compare this passage with the same utterance cited from Bishop Lowth's poetical version, in his New Translation:

Yet now, thus saith Jehovah,
 Who created thee, O Jacob; and who framed thee, O Israel;
 Fear thou not, for I have redeemed thee;
 I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

When thou passest through waters, I am with thee;
 And through rivers, they shall not overwhelm thee:
 When thou walkest in the fire, thou shalt not be scorched;
 And the flame shall not take hold of thee.
 For I am Jehovah, thy God;
 The Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.

In most of the books referred to the parallelism is so evident, even in the lack of metrical printing, that in many cases without the shifting of a single word it will be found easy to arrange a passage in parallel lines so as to set forth visibly its poetical structure. Take the following as a specimen, in which the verses as found in the Revised Version are simply reprinted in metrical parallel lines without any other change:

They have blown the trumpet, and have made all ready; Ezek. 7. 14-17
 But none goeth to the battle:
 For my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.
 The sword is without,
 And the pestilence and the famine within:
 He that is in the field shall die with the sword;
 And he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall
 devour him. . . .
 All hands shall be feeble,
 And all knees shall be weak as water.

The warnings and denunciations of these Books of Prophecy, spoken by Jehovah's messengers against Israel, Judah, and the surrounding nations in view of their inveterate wickedness, their idolatries, and varied disobedience, are terrible enough when they confront us on the page as usually printed, but their severity, their vividness, and their inner meaning cannot be fully appreciated until we read them in a metrical version. One of the outcries spoken against

Moab, for example, assumes new emphasis when thus set before the eye:

Jer. 48. 8, 10-
12

And the spoiler shall come upon every city,
And no city shall escape;
The valley also shall perish,
And the plain shall be destroyed;
As the Lord hath spoken. . . .
Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently,
And cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.
Moab hath been at ease from his youth,
And he hath settled on his lees,
And hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel,
Neither hath he gone into captivity:
Therefore his taste remaineth in him,
And his scent is not changed.
Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,
That I will send unto him them that pour off,
And they shall pour him off;
And they shall empty his vessels,
And break their bottles in pieces.

In like manner the words of encouragement and promise which these prophets often spoke, even in dark hours of national degeneration and doom, become more precious and beautiful when their poetical character and structure are made apparent in print. A single specimen must suffice, although there are hundreds which invite attention:

Hos. 14. 4-7

I will heal their backsliding,
I will love them freely;
For mine anger is turned away from him.
I will be as the dew unto Israel:
He shall blossom as the lily,
And cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
They that dwell under his shadow shall return;
They shall revive as the corn, and blossom as the vine;
The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

We have occupied considerable space in this outline of the peculiarities of the structure—the outward

form—of the poetry of the Old Testament, because this phase of the Bible is ordinarily but little heeded. The field, indeed, thus surveyed is for most readers utterly untilled; we might better say completely unexplored, a *terra ignota*. Yet when one has his attention directed to the hitherto unsuspected attractions which are involved in the metrical form of this portion of the Scripture it becomes invested with an affluence, a beauty, and often a splendor, which add to our intellectual and spiritual possessions measureless and permanent treasures.

While the New Testament possesses no poetical books, yet it will be found on examination that there are many passages in that section of the Book which are genuinely poetical in form. Passage after passage from the words of our Lord might be cited which reveal this sort of structure.

That our Lord might be numbered among the poets of Israel may seem an unusual suggestion, and yet it is not straining the truth to put the declaration in that fashion. All that is required is the casting of his utterances into the mold of a new typographical setting, and, behold, their poetical structure is immediately made manifest. Take some specimens, chosen almost without heed, and reprinted, without any change in the order of words, but in parallel lines:

And he said to him also that had bidden him,
 When thou makest a dinner or a supper,
 Call not thy friends, nor thy brethren,
 Nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors;
 Lest haply they also bid thee again,
 And a recompense be made thee.

Luke 14. 12-14

But when thou makest a feast,
 Bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:
 And thou shalt be blessed;
 Because they have not wherewith to recompense thee:
 For thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

Matt. 6. 19-21 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth,
 Where moth and rust doth consume,
 And where thieves break through and steal:
 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
 Where neither moth nor rust doth consume,
 And where thieves do not break through nor steal:
 For where thy treasure is,
 There will thy heart be also.

The denunciations uttered by our Lord in the closing week of his ministry in Jerusalem, when his foes were plotting to destroy him, sound like the words of Jeremiah or Ezekiel, and the resemblance becomes still more striking when the passages containing them are properly printed so as to reveal their poetical structure:

Matt. 23. 25-
 28 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
 For ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter,
 But within they are full from extortion and excess.
 Thou blind Pharisee,
 Cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter,
 That the outside thereof may become clean also.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
 For ye are like unto whited sepulchers,
 Which outwardly appear beautiful,
 But inwardly are full of dead men's bones,
 And of all uncleanness.
 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men,
 But inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Perhaps we may have some day a version of the New Testament in which all the utterances of our Lord which are genuinely metrical shall be printed so as to show that phase of them. It should be evident

to any one who studies the case that such an edition of the Gospel would give it a new charm.

After this study of the forms of Hebrew poetry we are now ready to examine its substance. What about its spirit, its purpose, its range? With what topics does it deal? With what aim was it written? These questions in part will be dealt with in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER VII
HEBREW POETRY; MOUNTAIN AND SEA

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan; and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the hinder sea; and the South, and the Plain of the valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day.

—Deut. 34. 1-6.

The heavens declare thy glory, Lord;
In every star thy wisdom shines;
But when our eyes behold thy word
We read thy name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light,
And nights and days, thy power confess,
But the blest volume thou hast writ
Reveals thy justice and thy grace.

—Isaac Watts.

CHAPTER VII

HEBREW POETRY: MOUNTAIN AND SEA

IN studying the substance and spirit of Hebrew poetry we face the distinctive fact that it is, taken throughout, a body of religious literature. The Song of Songs may be an exception to this law, for it seems devoid of any religious teaching except that which certain traditional interpreters read into it between the lines, and then force out from it by expository processes which cannot wisely be applied to any other book of the Bible. But the rule holds good for all other poetical writing in the Bible; it all deals with the interests of the human soul, with man as a religious being, with the higher life and the loftier destinies of the race. These Hebrew seers saw God everywhere, in nature, in history, in humanity, in government, in the stars, and in the human soul, in the events of time and in the administration of eternity.

This trait, taken in its relation to the insight, beauty, dignity, and power of these sections of Scripture, sets the poetry of the Bible off by itself. It brings home to us the truth that this chosen nation, the Jews, had a literature the creation of which ran through at least a whole millennium, and which in all of its aspects, themes, and life was religious through and through.

In the poetry of the Bible we find, as one of its notable phases, a devout recognition and appreciation of the works of God in nature. The beauty, the grandeur, the meaning, and the mystery of the outward world are therein discerned, unfolded, glorified with vividness beyond parallel in their relation to Him who created them and who sustains them in being. The rights of divine ownership which the Almighty has invested in the universe, and the care which he has exercised toward the work of his hands, are exalted beyond measure by the bards of the Bible. What a magnificent passage is that, for instance, from which we take the following:

Psa. 95. 4-7

In his hand are the deep places of the earth;
 The heights of the mountains are his also.
 The sea is his, and he made it;
 And his hands formed the dry land.
 O come, let us worship and bow down;
 Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker:
 For he is our God,
 And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

How noble and stately is the representation of divine ownership and rulership contained in the following familiar declaration, which belongs, of course, to the list of biblical utterances which people generally should know by heart:

Psa. 19. 1-4

The heavens declare the glory of God;
 And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
 Day unto day uttereth speech,
 And night unto night showeth knowledge.
 There is no speech nor language;
 Their voice cannot be heard.
 Their line is gone out through all the earth,
 And their words to the end of the world.

An interesting volume might easily be collated dealing with the notable sayings of Scripture concerning the mountains and the seas. There are scores of these, and they surpass in magnificence, and in insight and sympathy with nature, all that may be found on these subjects elsewhere. It is difficult for us to account for the fact that appreciation of the greatness and the mystical significance of the hills and the ocean is a heritage of recent date, so far as literature is concerned. It belongs almost exclusively to the years beginning with Scott, and Cowper, and Byron—not much over a hundred years ago. Wordsworth led the world, in that period, in the study of nature, in the mission of unfolding her innermost meaning, and in illumining her mysteries with the light of his discerning intelligence. We read ancient writings—the lyrics and dramas of great poets, the adventures of notable tourists, the story of travel on the sea and across the Alps—and hardly anywhere in the records do we find a suggestion that the grandeur of mountain scenery and the magnificence of the ocean made any deep impression on these writers. The same observation is true of mediæval writers and of those who wrote down almost to the close of the eighteenth century. It would seem that the light did not break from mountain top and from dashing wave upon human sight in its fullness of meaning until about a century ago. But the Hebrew poets, ages ago, anticipated this nineteenth-century birth of interest and appreciation and delight in nature-study, and expressed in their

poetry descriptions of these great natural objects and allusions to them which are immortal in beauty and profound in meaning. They were the first men of our race to give adequate expression to the feelings of reverence, awe, beauty, aspiration, occasioned in the human heart when the inmost messages of nature are discerned, the first to lead the human race in such a chorus of praise as this:

Deut. 33. 13-
16

Blessed of the Lord be his land;
For the precious things of heaven, for the dew,
And for the deep that coucheth beneath,
And for the precious things of the fruits of the sun,
And for the precious things of the growth of the moons,
And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,
And for the precious things of the everlasting hills,
And for the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof.

To-day there are many poems which suggest the glory of the hill country, the sublimity of the mountains, the higher values of peak and range, when their voice is interpreted to man's nature and he is taught to respond to their appeal. We think of Wordsworth's poetry; and of Coleridge, whose Morning Hymn to Mont Blanc stands foremost among the nature lyrics of the ages; and of Ruskin's ministry as the revealer of the deeper secrets of sky and cloud and landscape, and we marvel what sort of an age it was in the years previous to the time when these men began to speak forth to the world in prose and poetry the real significance of the works of the Creator. But after we have gone over all that they have written we must turn at last to the Hebrew prophets for the final word which exhibits "the precious things of the

Deut. 33. 15

everlasting hills"—things more precious than metals that are concealed in their caverns, and springs that flow from their cloven ridges, and timber that covers their flanks, and rocks that underpin their foundations. Where can we match utterances like these, taken almost at random from the Scripture?

- The blessings of thy father
Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors
Unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: Gen. 49. 26
- Then the earth shook and trembled,
The foundations also of the mountains moved
And were shaken. Psa. 18. 7
- The hills are girded with joy. 65. 12
- Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place
In all generations. 90. 1, 2
- Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
- The strength of the hills is his also. 95. 4
- The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord. 97. 5
- Let the floods clap their hands;
Let the hills sing for joy together
Before the Lord. 98. 8
- I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help. 121. 1
- Who hath . . . weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance? Isa. 40. 12
- The mountains and the hills shall burst forth before
you into song, 55. 12
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
- They shall say to the mountains, Cover us,
And to the hills, Fall on us! Hos. 10. 8
- Hear ye now what Jehovah saith:
Arise, contend thou before the mountains,
And let the hills hear thy voice.
Hear, O ye mountains, Jehovah's controversy,
And ye enduring foundations of the earth. Mic. 6. 1, 2

A little further inquiry would show that the most significant events in the Old Testament, and some of the extraordinary incidents of the New—such as the Temptation, the Transfiguration, and the Ascension—found their setting and background fitly framed upon mountain tops. Hither also our Lord often resorted for prayer in the nighttime, and it is clear from that fact that he, who was reared among the foothills of the Lebanon range, was a lover of the mountains. The Scriptures thus make a special appeal to those who are lovers of the beautiful and great in natural scenery, and to whom a great mountain,

“Standing alone ’twixt the earth and the heaven,
Heir of the sunset and herald of morn,”

is one of the most moving and inspiring spectacles that earth affords.

Another theme which called forth the loftiest strains of Hebrew poets was the splendor of the sea. The land of Israel bordered on the Mediterranean; years before the nation occupied its inheritance it was declared that “the great sea” should be their western border. Centuries before that time the “sand which is upon the seashore” was made to Abraham a symbol of the number of his spiritual progeny. The triumphal exit of the liberated hordes of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses through the waters of the Red Sea was by the genius of Asaph embedded in one of their national songs of praise for all time:

He clave the sea, and caused them to pass through;
And he made the waters to stand as an heap.

Num. 34. 6

Gen. 22. 17

Psa. 78. 13

Thus in their traditions, their hymns, and their geographical situation—affording opportunity for those who dwelt on the coast or who viewed the tumbling waters from hill or mountain top, shining afar off in the light of the sun, to study their beauty, their grandeur, their changing phases of storm and calm, and to gather from the spectacle lessons and suggestions not merely for their own generation but for all time—there are to be found abundant reasons for the fact now before us, that the poets of the Bible became, beyond all others who ever studied the “gathering together of the waters” which were called in the beginning “seas,” interpreters of their greatness, their symbolism, their majesty, and their spiritual significance for mankind.

Gen. 1. 10

The note that we made with regard to the study of mountain scenery in our time is true also concerning the ocean: only within the past hundred years have poets adequately discerned and unfolded the varied characteristics of the sea. The works of the great classical writers contain but little on this subject worthy to stand alongside of what has been written by the modern school of poets, beginning with Byron and Scott. Shakespeare has hardly anywhere a line to suggest that he was ever impressed by the greatness of the ocean, and those who followed him, up to the opening of the recent century, appeared to see nothing in the theme to quicken their fancy or awaken their enthusiasm or vivify their muse. But the tributes which the Hebrew poets paid to the sea are unspeakably great. There lie before me, as I write,

several volumes entirely devoted to poetry of the sea; many of the poems in these books are immortal, but they are all products of the last hundred years, and most of them have been written in that era of nature-study in which, fortunately for us, our lots are cast. But those who would hence conclude that the ocean did not inspire men to write until recent years need to refresh their studies and recast their conclusions, for the work of the Hebrew poets anticipates, precedes, and surpasses, we opine, all that has been done since their day. In support of this judgment we may bring forth from the Bible the chief allusions to the sea, and take only a glimpse of them as they are thus massed together. Noble and stirring as many of these are when viewed individually, they make their due impression only when they are seen in the aggregate. These ancient songs, when their voices rise together and their music is chorded into harmony, make a chorus of majesty and beauty unexampled elsewhere in the world of poetic utterance. Comment is scarcely needed to emphasize the magnificence of these citations—they appeal of themselves to the ordinary reader, just as the sea itself makes its own appeal to the beholder who stands upon the shore and notes the waters come sweeping in, or who in the midst of the ocean expanse finds on all sides a fresh revelation of the power and greatness of the Ruler of wind and wave:

Canst thou by searching find out God? . . .
 The measure thereof is longer than the earth,
 And broader than the sea.

Job 11. 7, 9

- Job 38. 8, 11 Who shut up the sea with doors, . . .
And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed?
- Psa. 33. 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap;
He layeth up the deeps in storehouses.
72. 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea.
77. 19 Thy way was in the sea,
And thy paths in the great waters.
89. 8, 9 Who is a mighty one like unto thee, O Jehovah? . . .
Thou rulest the pride of the sea:
When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.
93. 3, 4 The floods have lifted up, O Jehovah,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
Above the voices of many waters,
The mighty breakers of the sea,
Jehovah on high is mighty!
- 104.25,26 There is the sea, great and wide,
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
Both small and great beasts.
There go the ships.
- Isa. 23. 11 He hath stretched out his hand over the sea,
He hath shaken the kingdoms.
43. 16 Thus saith Jehovah,
Who maketh a way in the sea,
And a path in the mighty waters.
- { 57. 20, 21 But the wicked are like the troubled sea;
For it cannot rest,
And its waters cast up mire and dirt.
There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.
- Ezek. 26.18,19 Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall;
Yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be dismayed at thy
departure. . . .
When I shall bring up the deep upon thee,
And the great waters shall cover thee.
- Mic. 7. 19 He will tread our iniquities under foot;
And thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.
- Hab. 2. 14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory
of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the sea.

And the sea gave up the dead that were in it. Rev. 20. 13

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth;
For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;
And there was no more sea. 21. 1

They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep. Psa. 107. 23-31

For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the
depths:

Their soul melteth away because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wits' end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet;
So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.
Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Other phases of this portion of the Bible may be briefly dealt with later in the volume, particularly the fact that the Psalms—in their ministry to the conscience, in their awakening, melting, and devotional functions, in the keenness with which they touch the very quick of the soul, and move every faculty and power, and in the skill with which they portray all possible phases of the life of the spirit, from the depths of remorse and despair to the heights of heavenly rapture—stand alone in religious literature. They voice every emotion of sinner and saint; they paint with accuracy the various stages of sin and salvation; and accordingly they have for ages

revealed their purpose and efficiency as the praise and prayer book of the human race.

A brief remark remains yet to be written: The citations made in this chapter and the preceding one may seem to be lavish; in fact, they might have been manifolded without depleting the treasure-house of beauty and spiritual wealth from which they have been chosen. The poetry of the Bible is an exhaustless deposit of riches; were we to compare it to a mine we might simply say: These are sample nuggets; the mine is full of such!

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CHAPTER VIII
BIOGRAPHICAL ATTRACTIONS

Let us now praise famous men,
And our fathers that begat us.
The Lord manifested in them great glory,
Even his mighty power from the beginning.
Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms,
And were men renowned for their power,
Giving counsel by their understanding,
Such as have brought tidings in prophecies;
Leaders of the people by their counsels,
And by their understanding men of learning for the
people. . . .

All these were honored in their generations,
And were a glory in their days. . . .
Their seed shall remain forever,
And their glory shall not be blotted out.
Their bodies were buried in peace,
And their name liveth to all generations.

—Ecclesiasticus 44. 1-4, 7, 13, 14 (the Apocrypha).

And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I
tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and
Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued king-
doms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped
the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the
edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed
mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens.

—Heb. 11. 32-34.

Great God, with wonder and with praise
On all thy works we look;
But still thy wisdom, power, and grace
Shine brightest in thy book.

Here are our choicest treasures hid,
Here our best comfort lies;
Here our desires are satisfied,
And hence our hopes arise.

Lord, make us understand thy law,
Show what our faults have been;
And from thy gospel let us draw
The hope of pardoned sin.

—Isaac Watts.

CHAPTER VIII

BIOGRAPHICAL ATTRACTIONS

FOREMOST among the wondrous things contained in Scripture is its wealth of biographical detail, incident, and characterization. Hosts of men and women, of different ranks, of varying circumstances, manifold in temperament, and representing all phases of human nature, are depicted in the Bible with a vividness, an insight, a dissective and a penetrating skill which, taken together, set this volume apart by itself among the books of the world. In this aspect of the Book we have a universal portrait gallery of our race, where we may wander at will, studying the faces and scrutinizing the lives and even looking down deep into the hearts of countless folk, good, bad, indifferent; men of strength and miserable weaklings; patterns of wisdom and exemplars of folly; men who have overcome every adverse circumstance and every disadvantage of birth, environment, lineage, and temptation that can be suggested, and are pinnacled in the Book as instances of what a man may do and may become with God's help and under the operation of a virile and heroic purpose; and, on the other hand, pictures of men who with every incentive and surrounding to aid them have made shipwreck of faith, and have left on record their

life-history as a warning to all later generations: a portrait gallery which holds with growing interest the attention of the world, and which gains instead of losing appreciation and admiration as the years grow into centuries, since each new discovery in Bible lands and each successful attempt to freshen and vivify our English versions of Scripture help to bring out more strikingly the lineaments and the salient elements of character which mark these ancient biographies. It should be evident, even upon slight examination, that the human element thus brought to notice by the mention of the "lives" of all sorts of people enshrined in Scripture constitutes a charm not to be ignored.

This feature of the Bible accounts in part for the hold which the Book secures early in life upon the heart of childhood. To little ones the mother and the teacher tell the exquisite stories which abound in the Book, picturing them forth with that spontaneous exercise of dramatic and graphic skill which forms an essential function in the work of those who have to deal with children at school or in the home, and repeating the process year after year until the pupils are able to read for themselves portions of the Scripture story. The imagination of childhood is thus peopled with visions of adventure, with noble ideals, with heroic characters, with pictures whereby in the most effective way valuable truths are incorporated into the life in its formative stages. Without this biographical element the Bible could never have fastened itself upon the universal heart of childhood, as it has

done, generation after generation, wherever its teachings have become known.

As to the effectiveness of this sort of teaching in general through the agency supplied by notable biographies, there are many witnesses, and but one opinion. Plutarch, for instance, was one of the greatest scholars and writers of his time—eighteen centuries ago—a teacher of philosophy, a master of his own Greek tongue and of the Latin as well; a profound student of ethics, and of natural science; yet he is known to-day chiefly because of the biographies which he wrote. In his later years he set out to picture forth to the world forty-six "Parallel Lives," half of them chosen from the realm of Grecian life and half from the Roman annals. He did this so skillfully, so vigorously, so delightfully, that his work as well as his name is immortal. While criticism has been busy, especially in recent years, in the resolute effort to sift out from ancient classical writings the inaccuracies and misrepresentations and partisan bias which some of them contain, yet on the whole the data in Plutarch's "Lives" remain the chief authority in regard to the men whom he portrays. Minor defects have been discovered in the book, but the general impression which the reader forms after studying his work is now recognized by all scholars as the correct one. Those who desire to see the leading men of Greece—orators, legislators, generals, rulers—coupled each with a man somewhat similar in tastes, character, or career selected from the life of Rome, can find the task accom-

plished nowhere else so well as in this notable ancient work, which is still alive, although nearly every other vestige of the literature which was contemporary with Plutarch is covered with the dust of oblivion.

Literature in our own day is affluent in the department of biography—so that one suffers “the embarrassment of riches” in selecting a few of the best works as specimens of the charm which inheres in this kind of writing when at its best. The service, for example, which James Boswell rendered the world by his *Life of Samuel Johnson*—who had himself secured a good part of his literary influence by his *Lives of the Poets*—is proverbial. But for the biography written by Boswell the great lexicographer might have been in our day merely a shadowy name; but through that unrivaled specimen of a literary memoir we are permitted to know Dr. Johnson as though we had lived in London in his time. His greatness, his foibles and defects, his literary discernment, his vast knowledge, his constitutional indolence, his moods of penitence and depression, his feasts and his fasts, his vows and church observances, his proneness to spells of devotion, his joys and sorrows, his petulance and his partisanship, and a score of other characteristics—all are known to us simply because there was by his side a gifted biographer who loved and admired the best side of the man, taking notes, studying his individual peculiarities, and at last writing out the story with an amplitude which chimed fitly in with the largeness of the man

Boswell's Life? Johnson!

thus depicted and enshrined in the most famous biography ever given to the world.

Stanley's *Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold* and Irving's *Life of Washington* may also be cited as instances of the entrancing beauty of this sort of literature. It need not surprise us, therefore, to find that the Bible depends, for something of its amazing attractions, upon its biographies, great and small.

The elaborate pictures of the notable men of the Bible which are sketched, and in some measure detailed, in its pages command attention. They open with the narratives of the patriarchs. Abraham, in the very dawn of human history, separated from us by forty centuries, emerges from the mists of the past—a venerable figure, dignified, self-poised, devout, patient, the first of the great company of pioneers to follow the openings of Providence and journey westward toward the new lands which ever since his day, from time to time, have invited migration; the pattern believer, who when he got the impression that Jehovah required him to sacrifice his only son, in an hour when God's command and God's promise seemed to be at cross purposes, did not flinch; the man whose confidence in God's power and grace is taken in the New Testament as the supreme and ideal exhibition of saving faith—and becomes in the graphic record a familiar figure, a friend of God and an example to the ages!

Gen. ch. 12-23

Next in the picture gallery comes Isaac, quiet, harmless, unadventurous, a dim and nebulous char-

Gen. ch. 24-27

acter, hardly to be discerned in the shadows of antiquity; and then appears the strong, unfading portrait of Jacob, shrewd, self-seeking, not over-scrupulous; of the earth, earthy; at times sordid and mean, and yet with great capacities for a nobler life and for spiritual things long covered up in the subliminal parts of his nature—capacities which finally flowered into beauty and commanding growth so that when we study his career and note what the grace of God can do with coarse and common clay we see a new meaning in the psalmist's words, "The God of Jacob is our refuge."

Psa. 46. 7

Gen. ch. 37-50

And who can forget the matchless story of Joseph?—beloved by his father, hated by his jealous brothers, sold in his teens into Egypt, maintaining his equipoise and holding fast to his integrity when tempted, maligned and imprisoned, and retaining his grasp on the higher values when subjected to the specious allurements and demoralizations which unlimited wealth and arbitrary power involve. The salient lessons of his life—God's providential care of his own, the duty of fraternal love, the obligation to forget and forgive when one has been sorely injured, the privilege of discerning even in disaster and suffering a divine message and meaning—when these are written out in plain prose they are, of course, significant, but how much more inevitable and commanding they become when they appear in the details of the story as a matter of course, standing out in the drama, and making their own indelible impression.

This, of course, as everyone must see who gives the

slightest thought to the matter, is the aim of these Bible biographies: they present us with virtue and vice embodied, incorporated into human lives, set before us in immortal examples. Thus arrayed before us in panoramic vision they stir within us the spirit of emulation or warn us, on the other hand, with admonitions that cannot pass unheeded; they teach us what great and heroic qualities belong to human nature, and they also show us by dreadful exhibitions of vice, crime, weakness, and treachery to what depths of degradation a man may descend.

Much edifying and interesting matter, for instance, has been written by wise teachers to show that even children may serve the Lord, and that an early start in the way of righteousness may lead to a godly life and a career of vast influence; indeed, not only chapters but volumes have been written with that purpose in view. Useful as they are, all of them together fail to grip the imagination, and to take hold of the memory and move the heart, as does a single bit of biographical writing in the Old Testament, where we are told of the child Samuel, his praying mother, his child-ministrations in the sanctuary, and his response to the divine call—"Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." 1 Sam. ch. 1-3

The biblical virtue of humility—to take another case—is hard to define so as to make it clear to inquiring minds. To be humble is often regarded, even by well-instructed people, as synonymous with being timid, tame-spirited, lacking in self-respect and in courageous aggressiveness. The Bible is wise

enough not to attempt to define this virtue—instead of definitions it gives us pictures—and in this particular case it portrays this noble grace of humility so vividly and in such relation with other qualities as to require the conclusion that this virtue is consonant with the most magnificent combination of noble aims and dispositions to be found anywhere in the world.

Abraham teaches us what this grace is when we see him bowing in self-abasement and lowly reverence before Jehovah and exclaiming under his breath, “Behold, I am but dust and ashes.” Gideon illustrates the meaning and beauty of this trait when in dismay he cries out upon being summoned to undertake a forlorn-hope enterprise, “Oh Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” Jeremiah, who became the counselor of kings, teaches the same lesson when at the outset of his prophetic ministry he utters his pathetic protest, “Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak: for I am a child.” Who can mistake the nature of humility when he considers the picture found in the later part of the career of the patriarch of Uz, who says, at the end of the long argument:

Gen. 18. 27

Judg. 6. 15

Jer. 1. 6

Job 42. 5, 6

“I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear:
But now mine eye seeth thee,
Wherefore I abhor myself and repent
In dust and ashes”?

The Roman centurion, evidently a man of commanding character, possessing the dignity of a true

soldier, types the quality under consideration when he responds to the Master's assurance, "I will come and heal thy servant," with the self-deprecating words, "O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." And Saint Paul, who declares that he is "the least of the apostles, not meet to be called an apostle," and who later writes, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," is a witness to the fact that the deepest humility may coexist in the heart with the most generous and lofty qualities in human character.

Matt. 8. 5-10

1 Cor. 15. 9

Eph. 3. 8

With this preliminary study we may begin to apprehend the reason why the contents of Scripture are so largely poured into biographical molds, which serve to make virtue clear to the eye and embody it before the imagination; and to delineate by means of living examples the meaning and worth of the fundamental graces. These living patterns of holy character appeal to all that is noble and emulous in our hearts. As we study them Joshua passes before the eye a type of soldierly devotion and courage; and Job teaches us by his patience and resignation that it is possible for a mortal to say in the very extremity of loss and pain, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him"; and Andrew, the first of the Master's disciples, appears, to show us how easy it is for a young convert, after having found Christ, to go out and bring his brother to the Saviour; while, greatest of them

Job 13. 15

John 1. 41

all, Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, by his personality and career, pictured with extraordinary vividness in part by his own pen in his epistles, and in part by Saint Luke, his fellow worker and beloved physician, reveals the spirit and plan of the pattern missionary, serving as an ever-living example of zeal, wisdom, compassion, and love for all lands and ages until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ!

Rev. 11. 15

The biblical biographies, moreover, are fraught with warnings, also, of the most searching sort. The frailties, blunders, and sins of the saints and the perverseness, cruelty, and stubbornness of the wicked are told with a plainness and a vividness that are forever impressive. The truth that middle life and old age have their peculiar perils, for instance, is urged upon us by the story of David's double transgression, with the punishment which followed hard upon it; as well as by the breakdown of Solomon, who in old age loved many strange women, and was by them turned from the worship of the Almighty to follow other gods. Indeed, there is scarcely to be found anywhere in life's voyage a dangerous reef, or a treacherous quicksand, where a mortal may be engulfed, that is not marked in Scripture as by a beacon light or a buoy in the story of some poor soul who has thereon made shipwreck of faith. Out from the pages of these Bible stories come hosts of solemn admonitions issuing forth from lips long ago turned to dust. Here Pharaoh warns us against the folly and blindness of those who when they see that there

1 Kings 11. 4

Exod. 8. 15


is respite harden their hearts; and Judas bears unwilling testimony age after age that a man may be for years a companion of Jesus Christ, and even one of his apostles, and yet turn out to be a traitor; and Pilate is an illustration of the doom which comes upon the man who trifles with his sense of justice, caters to the prejudices of the mob, puts his political interests and office ahead of his moral convictions, and shuts his eyes to the true, the beautiful, and the good, when the Truth embodied stands in his very presence!

Luke 23. 13-
24

Sometimes in the brief biographical allusions in the Scripture there are found instances where a life-story is summed up in a sentence or two, or where in a phrase a tragedy is depicted. Take, by way of illustration, the case of Demas, one of the companions and helpers of Paul in Rome during the apostle's imprisonment toward the end of his ministry. All that is known concerning Demas is found in three references, but these brief mentions of the name make up a picture full of meaning. The apostle, writing to one of his churches, joins this man with one of the noblest of his yokefellows, saying, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you." About the same time, in writing to a brother in Asia Minor, he brings into a single verse four men by name who unite in salutations: "Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers." Here we see Demas, in the midst of choice friends, ministering to the apostle in prison, helping to carry out his plans, holding fellowship with men worthy to rank with the "glorious company of the apostles and the

Col. 4. 14
Philem. 24
2 Tim. 4. 9

goodly fellowship of the prophets" for all time. Alas! this is not the whole story. There is another mention of this man, in which he is singled out to stand by himself. The close of the great ministry of Paul is near; the plots of his foes are culminating, and he writes his farewell letter, in which he urges Timothy to visit him in Rome: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." There in three verses we behold a tragedy enacted—a man counted worthy to be a friend and fellow worker of Paul, serving the interests of the kingdom for a while in Rome, visiting the apostle in prison, holding sweet converse with the other brethren, and numbered for the time among the saints; turning at last from his teacher and friend, giving up his commission, stopping his ears against the call of duty, and absorbed once more in the cares and gains and enticements of this present world—the world of sight and sense, the world of pleasure and gain, the world of allurements and adventure; finding his "own place" in the awful record, out of which he passes into darkness. He loved the world; he forsook Paul, he escaped being a hero, and sinks out of sight as a renegade. From this single instance we can see how marvelous even the biographical allusions of the Scripture sometimes are!



CHAPTER IX
THE GRIP ON THE CONSCIENCE

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lov-
 ing-kindness:
 According to the multitude of thy tender mercies
 blot out my transgressions.
 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
 And cleanse me from my sin.
 For I acknowledge my transgressions:
 And my sin is ever before me.
 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
 And done that which is evil in thy sight:
 That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest,
 And be clear when thou judgest.

—Psa. 51. 1-4.

Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless
 and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and
 profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers,
 for manslayers, for fornicators, for abusers of themselves
 with men, for menstealers, for liars, for false swearers, and
 if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine;
 according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God,
 which was committed to my trust.

—1 Tim. 1. 9-11.

Holy Bible, Book divine,
 Precious treasure, thou art mine!
 Mine to tell me whence I came,
 Mine to tell me what I am,
 Mine to chide me when I rove;
 Mine to show a Saviour's love;
 Mine art thou to guide my feet,
 Mine to judge, condemn, acquit.
 Mine to comfort in distress,
 If the Holy Spirit bless;
 Mine to show by living faith
 Man can triumph over death;
 Mine to tell of joys to come,
 And the rebel sinner's doom:—
 Holy Bible, Book divine,
 Precious treasure, thou art mine!

—John Burton.

CHAPTER IX

THE GRIP ON THE CONSCIENCE

Thus far we have noted chiefly the attractions of the Bible which are to be classified as æsthetic, literary, rhetorical. These, however, are not the supreme charms of Scripture, although they are involved in those elements which attach to it imperishable interest and value. The Book has a hold upon human nature in view of other aspects and qualities than those which we have been studying. Beautiful as this volume is, considered as a matchless specimen of ancient literature, charming as are its narratives, noble as is its poetry, and heroic as are its models of character, it could never have reached its supreme rank in the world but for other elements which it possesses in unique measure. It holds fast to man with a grip like that which the sun exerts upon its planetary system by means of gravitation, like that which the magnet sways upon the steel, a grip the like of which is shown by no other book in the world. This grip is the hold it has upon the moral faculties, the appeal which it makes to the ethical judgment, the power which it has to awaken the conscience, to rouse the soul from its guilty stupor, and to enlighten, urge, persuade, and guide men out of darkness into day, out of a condition of

evil, waywardness, carelessness, and conscious sin, into a new hope, a new joy, a new life.


In this view of the Book perhaps the word "attract" or the term "charm" is not the word to use to describe the function under consideration; the Bible looked at from this standpoint commands, grips, and holds the human soul. It deals with man as a transgressor, as a violator of law, as a creature under condemnation and in peril, whose nature is deranged and ungeared, as one who needs help, and renovation, and—to use a single term—salvation. This is the peculiar function of the Book which gives it an incomparable influence and scope in the world wherever it is read. The Bible possesses a singular individualizing ministry; it singles out and seizes the offender and brings home to him his guilt and need; it makes its appeal as though it were endowed with life and personality; it startles, arraigns, condemns men everywhere with its awful accusation, "Thou art the man!" But for this quality, we repeat, the Book would be comparatively inert; it would have no revolutionary and explosive and arousing force; for its literary beauties and its dramatic charms, however unique they may be, are not fraught with the power to change the heart of man and renew the face of the earth. To this peculiarity of the Bible our attention is now directed—its appeal to the conscience, its awakening, dissecting, arraigning functions.

There are problems related to this aspect of the Bible with which we have nothing now to do. We need not stop to ask how evil came into the world;

nor how far astray from original righteousness man has gone; nor to what extent his nature is corrupted; nor what is the exact interplay of divine decrees with the human will. The skillful physician with a critical case in hand does not spend much time in trying to determine where or how the patient "caught" the malady; the chief thing to be done is to bring help and healing as speedily as possible. Accordingly, we shall deal here with the facts in the case—not with the philosophy which may be supposed to underlie them.

In the Revised Version a favorite proof-text much used in former days has a fresh and singularly interesting rendering. It used to read, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" In this form the passage has long been used as a part of the basis on which to build the doctrine of "total" depravity. We do not desire to go into that old discussion, nor attempt to determine to what extent man is a depraved being. The later rendering commends itself by its freshness, force, and wisdom: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is desperately sick: who can know it?" Does not that utterance accord with human experience everywhere? Is there a man or woman on earth who will candidly deny it? Does it not cohere with the testimony of the conscience, with the utterances of poets, ancient and modern, with the convictions and researches of the philosopher and psychologist, with the conclusions alike of the pagan and the Christian student? The moral nature

Jer. 17. 9



of man is diseased; it is "desperately sick"; there is derangement of a deplorable character in what the apostle calls the "inward man"; and in many cases the famous story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde typifies the conflict which daily goes on in the human heart between the noble and ignoble elements, between good and evil, between right and wrong, between deity and demonism. Who is there in the world who has not found himself torn by this struggle, bowed under this burden, cowed and crushed into a sense of guilt and helplessness and danger, and forced to use the apostle's words, again and again, in his trouble: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Rom. 7. 24

It is to man in this estate of moral lapse, in this condition of inward struggle and tumult—lamenting his folly, his moral blindness, his stupidity, his waywardness, his indolence, his proneness to go in the wrong direction, to approve that which is good while he pursues that which is bad, to do violence to his better aims and ideals—that the Bible comes with its terrible arraignment, with its command to repent, and with its proffer of grace and help for every time of need. And it is this element of the Book which gives it a hold on men that cannot be evaded or shaken off.

The messages of warning and the denunciations spoken to ancient Israel have not lost their application to men. They may be used, with hardly a change, in the messages uttered by God's prophets to-day. Look at a few of them, and ask whether

these are effete and obsolete words, belonging to an age far away from us, or whether, on the other hand, they are not exactly applicable to great multitudes in our own time:

Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. . . . What mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor? . . . The daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet. . . . Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! . . . I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. . . . Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue muttereth wickedness. . . . Among my people are found wicked men: they watch as fowlers lie in wait; they set a trap, they catch men. . . . There is no truth, nor kindness, nor knowledge of God in the land. . . . My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. . . . They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. . . . Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. . . . The name of the wicked shall rot. . . . They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. . . . It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help!

Isa. 3. 11, 15, 16
5. 20
Prov. 1. 24, 25
Isa. 59. 3
Jer. 5. 26
Hos. 4. 1, 6
8. 7
Isa. 1. 2
Prov. 10. 7
Hos. 7. 2
13. 9

Corresponding to these searching accusations, which are more than justified by the history of the people to whom they were directed, are the confessions of sin found in the Bible. The Psalms especially are full of these acknowledgments, which have been used, generation after generation, as the most accurate and contrite expressions of personal and communal wrongdoing and ill-desert that language can frame. Let some of them be cited as specimens of hundreds which are contained in the Bible:

Ezra 9. 6
 Psa. 25. 7
 31. 10
 38. 4
 40. 12
 51. 2-4

I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens. . . . Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions. . . . My strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are wasted away. . . . Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. . . . Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have overtaken me so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me. . . . Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight.

The doctrine of sin, as suggested by these penitential utterances and by these scriptural arraignments, is very different from the so-called modern liberal teaching in which sin is minified, smoothed over, explained away as a matter of heredity, or environment, or perhaps a relic of animal impulse and brute nature not yet sloughed off. Sometimes it is declared that man needs only better housing, better food, and better education in order to rid the world entirely of vice and crime. This view is so short-sighted, so inconsistent with the administration of law all about us, so lacking in historic or philosophic basis, so contrary to the deeper convictions of universal manhood, that it is hardly worth while to debate it. The truth is that the heart of man responds to the voice of Scripture, and declares: "It is true. I am naturally out of sympathy with righteousness, estranged from my Creator; my spirit is ungeared, there is a dreadful twist in it: I am perverted, and wrung aside from goodness. I need to be renewed, made over again, cleansed from my sin."

It is this prompt, this inevitable, this spontaneous response of the conscience of man in all ages to the declarations of the divine word, in regard to the weakness, the waywardness, and the guilt of the soul, that constitutes one of the invincible proofs of the superhuman authority of the Scripture. The Bible says: "Thou hast sinned. Thou art in condemnation. Thou hast transgressed the law of thy God, and hast brought ruin upon thyself." And the soul—the universal soul, the soul of man in all lands and in all generations—bows in the dust and cries out, "Alas, it is true. I have been found out. My secret sins are brought forth into the light of day. I cannot hide myself from this penetrating, revealing, accusing word of Scripture, which pierces my soul as though it were indeed the arrow of the Almighty."

Thus again and again, in Christian and in pagan lands, even a few detached passages of Scripture, filled with arousing and arraiging power, have sufficed to awaken transgressors from their sinful stupor even without the intervention of a human voice or a priestly prayer or a teacher's instruction.

The teaching of the Master with regard to the sinfulness of man's nature is unmistakable in its meaning. His words have no uncertain ring in connection with this theme:

Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . . Ye must be born again. . . . A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. . . . For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,

Matt. 18. 3

John 3. 7

Matt. 12. 35

15. 19

Luke 13. 5
John 3. 19

fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man. . . . Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. . . . And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness ather than the light; for their works were evil.

It should certainly be clear to the candid student of the words of Jesus Christ that he did not believe or teach that man is simply a weakling, or that his trouble is immaturity and ignorance, and that he only needs a little moral coddling in order to grow into strength and beauty. The evil in man's condition and nature as the Master diagnosed it is a radical and desperate one; he located the trouble in the very deepest recesses of the soul; he declared that the heart itself must be renewed in order that moral health may be secured.

Many pages might be occupied with this theme without exhausting it, but we have cited enough truth from the Word to show that one of the functions of the Bible is to dissect, uncover, and quicken into new consciousness the guilty nature of man. Wherever that word has a fair chance it does this very thing. Whose fault is it, then, that we have lost in our time the sense of sin? Who is to blame for the prevalent impression that men no longer are deeply troubled with "conviction of sin," that the ordinary preaching of the modern pulpit makes but little of the "sinfulness of sin"; that the modern conscience, of men and women alike, seems to be an easy-going, unburdened, unthinking conscience, and that the very word "lost," which the Master uses again and again to describe the moral condition of our race,

has dropped almost out of the vocabulary of our age?

Has the Bible been neglected so long that men have forgotten its denunciations, its threats, its definitions of guilt, its revelations of the doom which it declares against the impenitent? Have its awful truths been so glossed over, so toned down, so ignored, so emasculated, that men have been allowed to go to sleep on the brink of destruction, with none to warn them of a wrath to come? Or have men so doped their own consciences with greed, with worldliness, with selfish ease, with luxurious living, or with sottish indulgences that they can read or hear the teachings of the Bible in regard to sin and its penalties, and yet fancy that there is no real earnestness or genuine severity in them? Whatever may be the case, let it be once more said that whenever the moral grip of the Bible upon a human soul or upon a generation has been loosened, wherever the ear is closed against the warnings of Scripture, then and there destruction like the breaking forth of waters waits for that soul, and for that generation.

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CHAPTER X
THE PROMISES

My son, attend to my words;
Incline thine ear unto my sayings.
Let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep them in the midst of thine heart.
For they are life unto those that find them,
And health to all their flesh.
Keep thy heart with all diligence;
For out of it are the issues of life.
Put away from thee a froward mouth,
And perverse lips put far from thee.
Let thine eyes look right on,
And let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
Make level the path of thy feet,
And let all thy ways be established.
Turn not to the right hand nor to the left:
Remove thy foot from evil.

—Prov. 4. 20-27.

What advantage then hath the Jew? . . . Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God.

—Rom. 3. 1, 2.

For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

—Heb. 4. 12, 13.

Whence but from heaven could men, unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price!

—John Dryden.

CHAPTER X

THE PROMISES



1. A MARKED feature of Scripture, and one of its distinctive attractions, as well as one of its secrets of far-reaching and ever-growing influence, is lodged in the promises—"precious and exceeding great"— 2 Pet. 1. 4 which are found therein. In the early record we find but few; these grow in number and scope and beauty from age to age, and when at last the Book is complete it is found to contain a great multitude of these covenants of grace whereby countless blessings are assured to those who are the heirs of the kingdom.

A visitor to a great astronomical observatory one night was asked by the scientist in charge of the telescope, "Have you ever seen the star called Vega?" The reply was, "No; where is it?" The visitor then looked up through the opening in the dome in the direction indicated, and could barely distinguish a star, in the midst of a bit of star-mist in the dark blue sky. "Come here," said the astronomer, "I want you to see what Vega really looks like." And forthwith the great telescope was adjusted in the proper way, and the visitor looked into the eyepiece to find Vega. Behold, there was a star of brilliant white, set in the midst of a constellation of multi-colored suns, yellow, green, crimson, all aflame with

indescribable splendor. After feasting his soul with the sight he turned away awestricken, glad, and worshipful; he had seen one of the glories of the skies.

The early skies of Scripture have but few stars of promise shining in them, but as the ages pass, and as men are trained to see the invisible and to understand the gracious complexity and divine amplitude of the covenants of mercy, those stars expand, are multiplied, take on themselves new tints, increase in lustrous magnificence, until each promise becomes a constellation, radiant with heavenly beauty.

The basis of the hundreds of promises in Scripture, covering every variety of human need, is to be found in the early covenant given to Abraham at the very outset of his career, when he was led out from his ancestral and idolatrous environment and started on his pilgrimage toward the new land—which was known distinctively for ages as the land of promise—the closing portion of which covenant contains the very essence of the whole gracious transaction: “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” This covenant was illumined later by the assurance that the descendants of Abraham should be great in number, like the sands of the sea, and that in some one of them there would be found blessing for the human race. The covenant made with Abraham, therefore, was not simply the assurance that his children should in due time inherit Canaan, but that there should be born among them in later ages One who would bring blessing to the sons of men. This promise of a Saviour, gradually through the ages

Gen. 12. 3

Gen. 22. 17, 18

Gal. 3. 8, 16

made more and more definite and clear, was, according to the apostolic interpretation of Scripture, the promise given unto the fathers, and it runs through the books of history, through the Psalms, and through the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament, like a thread of gold or crimson, binding into a strange unity the record of revelation. Thus in successive centuries for nearly two thousand years messengers from Jehovah appeared, each one adding a new tint to the prophetic portrait, clarifying the outline, portraying more distinctively the features, and announcing with increasing definiteness the functions of Him who was thus foretold to Abraham and from time to time to his descendants—and each one declaring with enlarging emphasis, “He will come, he will come!” And at last the One thus long foretold appeared, his gracious perfections, his wonderful works, his resemblance to the prophetic portrait, and his own personal testimony all proclaiming to the world: “This indeed is the One who was to come. He is come to seek and to save that which was lost!”

Acts 3. 25
13. 32

2. The discerning reader of the Bible soon comes to the conclusion that one mighty agency in the training of the chosen people for their mission in the world was this promise which was given to the fathers, with the additional covenants which from time to time were clustered about it. Repeated age after age was the pledge spoken to Abraham, “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan.” It was with this faith that Joseph was sustained when generations later he

Gen. 17. 8

came to die: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. . . . And ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Still later, when the bondage of the children of Israel had reached its limit in Egypt, this promise of Canaan as a national inheritance was repeated to Moses and to Joshua. Thus the promise of Canaan was a unifying bond, an educating force, and a tie to hold the tribes fast to their ancestral hopes and faith.

Gen. 50. 24, 25

Exod. 3. 8

Josh. 1. 1-6

It will be found, furthermore, that at each stage in their history the Jews were guided, checked, helped, encouraged by promises of various kinds given to them in critical hours of need. When, for instance, they were in captivity their unity was preserved and their national life was maintained in good part by the work of Jehovah's messengers, who assured them that if they repented God would in due time forgive their iniquity and restore them to their own land again. Indeed, the prophecies of different kinds concerning the Jewish people, and their good and evil fortunes, are so many that a chapter, or possibly a volume, would be required in order to fully outline them.

3. This method of teaching and training, whereby the inner life is nourished and built up by means of promises, is not a thing foreign to our common experience and observation. Is not a very large portion of our daily life founded on promises? Is not the basis of the marriage tie and the home a promise, spoken usually with the sanctions of religion,

and the prayer for the two who are married that they may "keep this solemn covenant between them made"? Are not commercial transactions, banking business, and, in fact, the whole fabric of our social life built upon human promises? Take out of our experience, out of our plans, out of our week-time work this one element of faith in human promises, our expectations concerning the pledged or implied word of our fellows, and what would be left of the entire structure? Is it strange, then, that God, who trains us to-day by means of this method, has put into his Scripture, from beginning to end, as essential components of its structure and plan, his gracious promises, which induce in the soul a forward and an upward look, which teach confidence in God's fidelity, his wisdom, and his protecting care and power?

4. When the hundreds of promises in the Bible are systematized it will be found that they tend to form themselves into three or four great classes. We find in them roughly outlined first and foremost a series of covenants assuring pardon to the penitent.

This great blessing is pledged to the world in many exquisitely tender and beautiful passages. It stands in the foreground among all the blessings secured, by the grace of God and the provisions of mercy in the gospel, to the human race. Without forgiveness there could be no basis laid in the consciousness of the sinner for any later and larger operation of mercy. What prospect could there be for the renewal of our broken natures, for the rehabilitation of the fallen and ruined structure of the soul, for the reconstruction

of the marred and militant faculties which under the dominion of sin have waged their deadly warfare within us, unless first the assurance of pardon for all the sins of the past were afforded to the sorrowing and burdened conscience?

How manifold are the passages in which God reveals his willingness to forgive! Those who depreciate and malign the "God of the Old Testament" surely have forgotten or for the time ignored the many places in which, even in the Pentateuch, his forgiving mercy is unfolded. One of the earliest of the revelations made to Moses thus depicted the God of Israel:

Exod. 34. 6, 7

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

Turn, for example, to the book of Leviticus, and note how in the chapters which are full of the details which describe how bullocks, sheep, and goats are to be prepared for the sacrifice, and in what manner various oblations are to be offered, there runs through the whole order of service like a strain of heavenly music the refrain, occurring again and again, "and he shall be forgiven," "and he shall be forgiven." In one of the oldest of the Psalms Jehovah is described as the One "who forgiveth all thine iniquities." One of the greatest of the prophets, rehearsing expressly the "new covenant" which was to be fulfilled in the gospel, makes this particular mention of the blessing of pardon: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." In what varied imagery

Lev. 4. 26, 31,

35
Lev. 5. 10, 16,
18

Psa. 103. 3

Jer. 31. 34

the prophets depict the completeness of this provision of the divine mercy! The Orient form of speech, with its vast capacity for symbolism, is stretched to its limit in order to express the fullness of God's mercy in this respect:

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions.	Isa. 44. 22
As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.	Psa. 103. 12
Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.	Isa. 1. 18
Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.	38. 17
Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.	Mic. 7. 19

In the New Testament this provision of God's grace, ministering satisfaction to the deepest needs of the soul, finds still larger expression.

Our Lord, throughout his ministry, assumed and proclaimed as his own divine prerogative—which has ever been regarded as one of his chief claims and credentials—the right to forgive sins. He said to the multitude at Capernaum, in the moment when he healed the man sick of the palsy, “Ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.” To the man himself he said, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven.” To the woman who was a sinner the Master said, “Thy sins are forgiven.” When he instituted the Lord's Supper he declared, “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” And at the very last, in his final instructions to his apostles, he taught them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached

	Matt. 9. 2-6
	Luke 7. 48
	Matt. 26. 28
	Luke 24. 46, 47

Acts 2. 38

in his name unto all the nations." The remission of sins was held forth by Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost as the glad privilege of even the men who had plotted and executed the death of their Lord, and throughout Paul's preaching and writing the same jubilant note is sounded, that "in him we have our redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

Col. 1. 14

Scores of other passages might be cited were it necessary to amplify the truth which we are setting forth. It is clear, however, without further proof, that many of the provisions of mercy, set forth in varied phraseology, in many parts of the Book, center in and radiate forth from this one main covenant, namely, that God offers to the contrite penitent the blessing of pardon. The burden may be lifted, the darkness may be scattered, the smitten and tortured conscience may be healed by forgiveness! The soul, disburdened of its load, may exultantly sing:

O love, thou bottomless abyss,
 My sins are swallowed up in thee!
 Covered is my unrighteousness,
 Nor spot of guilt remains on me,
 While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
 Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.

5. Another abundant and fruitful cluster of promises assure guidance and protection to those who are allied to God by faith and obedience. Encouraged by these promises disciples of Jesus Christ may go forth with gladness to meet duty, danger, trial, sorrow, and loss, without complaint and without dread. Pain and disease may afflict the body, property may

be destroyed, calamities inexplicable in their severity may occur, but those who trust and obey are confident that their real interests are secure in God's keeping. In the midst of midnight gloom they may steady themselves on the truth which supported one of God's messengers in the ancient days: "When I sit in darkness the Lord will be a light unto me." They learn by their experiences of God's help in trying hours that the real thing in this world is character, and that one of its noblest elements is fortitude. For the cultivation of this knowledge and this faith there are many covenants given, of which these are specimens:

Mic. 7. 8

My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Exod. 33. 14
 He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Psa. 23. 2

The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. 25. 9

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. 32. 8

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. 73. 24

The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in dry places, and make strong thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. Isa. 58. 11

O fear the Lord, ye his saints: Psa. 34. 9, 10

For there is no want to them that fear him.

The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger:

But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Matt. 6. 30

And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. Rom. 8. 28

Phil. 4. 6, 7

In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Deut. 33. 25

As thy days, so shall thy strength be.

6. The word "comfort" sums up the contents and spirit of another set of scriptural promises. These covenants of grace are adapted to the condition of men and women and children living in a world of care and sorrow, subject to bereavement and misfortune, and liable on every side to various forms of trouble and trial. Amid such conditions and often oppressed by them the world would be a dismal and hopeless region unless it were cheered and enlightened and buoyed up by the solaces which can be administered only from a higher Power. Such solaces, of a manifold variety, are enshrined in many passages of Scripture, which have proved for ages, to a countless number of forlorn and needy souls, the source of strength and hope. To these words of consolation all manner of afflicted ones have turned—parents grieving for their dead children, little ones crying out for "the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still"; strong men who have suddenly found the props swept from beneath their feet and the earthly foundations giving way in an hour of unforeseen loss and calamity; prisoners immured because of their love for liberty, their fealty to conscience, and their affection for God's Word; martyrs in their cells or at the stake or on the rack, or ostracized and cast out from home and society for the

stand they have taken in behalf of duty and Christ—these and countless hosts besides have turned to God's Word and in it have found exhaustless fountains of refreshment, "wellsprings in the desert," strength to hold them up, courage and fortitude wherewith to bear otherwise intolerable burdens, and grace to help in every time of need. Without the consolation which God has thus made what resource would be left for man on earth in sorrow and suffering? Whither could we turn, or to whom or to what could we go in bereavement and disaster, had we no comforting covenants in the Bible?

Many pages could be filled with citations instancing this biblical feature; we must be content with a few which are typical of scores of utterances fraught with a consolation nowhere else to be found:

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.	Isa.	66.	13
The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.	Psa.	9.	9
In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.		27.	5
Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.		34.	19
Jehovah will support him upon the couch of languishing; Thou makest all his bed in his sickness.		41.	3
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.		46.	1
Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.		55.	22
My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.		73.	26
Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.		103.	13
This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.		119.	50
And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-	Isa.	4.	6

time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

- Isa. 40. 1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
 43. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
61. 1, 2 He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, . . . to comfort all that mourn.
- John 14. 1, 18 Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. . . . I will not leave you comfortless.
- 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Pardon, safety, comfort: what clusters of blessings are provided in these promises which we have thus brought together in order before the eye! There are many other treasures in the world, gold, silver, precious stones, houses, lands, great estates, wealthy kingdoms, vast empires crowded with material resources: but there are times in a human life when a single precious promise from God's Word, inherited by faith, affording foothold for the soul, and light for the tear-blinded eyes, and bringing near the healing and helping touch of a Father's hand, is worth more than all these treasures put together!

Who, then, can overestimate the beauty, the attractions, the exhaustless charms of a volume which is compact with hundreds of such covenants of mercy?

CHAPTER XI
HOME LIFE IN THE BIBLE

Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.

—James 1. 21-25.

Does the Lord of glory speak
To his creatures here below?
And may souls so frail and weak
All his gracious dealings know?
Does the blessed Bible bring
Tidings from our heavenly King?
Oh with what intense desire
Should we search that sacred book!
Here our zeal should never tire;
Here we should delight to look
For the rules by mercy given,
To conduct our souls to heaven.
Shall not he that humbly seeks
All the light of truth discern?
Do we not, when Jesus speaks,
Feel our hearts within us burn?
For his soul-reviving voice
Bids the mourner to rejoice.
Lord, thy teaching grace impart,
That we may not read in vain;
Write thy precepts on our heart,
Make thy truths and doctrines plain:
Let the message of thy love
Guide us to thy rest above.

—William H. Bathurst.

CHAPTER XI

HOME LIFE IN THE BIBLE

1. THE pictures of home life in the Scripture, the ideals of domestic conduct and character which are therein embodied, and the rules laid down in the Book for the cultivation of the moral and religious life of the household, have been chief among the forces that have helped to elevate mankind and shape the higher civilization of our race. The nobler joys of the household, the amenities which soften, sweeten, and illumine its fellowship, the sympathies which bind in one communion father, mother, and children in delightful relationships and in common aims and hopes, and, in brief, all the varied interests, employments, comforts, and inspirations which are clustered together under the term "the Christian home," find their source and origin in the examples and teachings of the Bible. Wherever those teachings are unknown or ignored, the institution called a home, with the virtues and graces inseparably associated with it in Christendom, is not to be found; while wherever the Scripture goes it carries with it as a matter of course, and by virtue of its leavening influence and its models of domestic character and helpfulness, the ministrations and graces out of which grow home life, home affections, and home happiness.

Were it necessary to fortify this ground and to

prove this contention, all that would be necessary would be to study domestic life in Christian nations, or in the better classes of the Hebrew race in contrast with the same phase of existence in Mohammedan or pagan countries, or amid savage tribes, where childhood is neglected, woman is a slave, the place of residence a prison, and domestic life a scene of selfishness, cruelty, ignorance, and often manifold degradation. At its very best, home life in heathen environments—or in non-Christian circumstances, if the term is preferred—is so far removed in its tone, fellowship, mutual recognition of rights, privileges, and self-denying love from the ideals of the Bible that the difference is seen at a glance, and felt by the heart and perceived by intuitions even where it is not immediately seen with the eye. The home, as blessed, purified, elevated, pictured in the Old Testament and the New, is an institution which comes down to us from Edenic traditions, and in its noblest estate is fraught with so many blessings, benefits, and comforts that there is hardly any other single realm of God's bounty to be compared with it.

2. In our time, when facilities for travel are so many, and when it is so easy to visit outlandish countries, and to compare observations and experiences of different regions and civilizations, this contrast has become all the more vivid. The testimony of tourists and of missionaries, the studies of explorers and sociologists, the revelations of the photographer and the painter, as to the condition of children and women in those lands where the gospel has not yet

gained the right of way, are all of the same sort, putting emphasis on the fact that everywhere in the world where gospel light has not yet shone there is lacking from the life of our race that manifold and most benign institution which we sum up into the sweetest word in our language and glorify in a song that will never die—"Home, Sweet, Sweet Home." The very first answer that students of the institutions of the world would make to the question, What is the radical difference you found in your journeys between English-speaking countries, for instance, and those lands where alien faiths, or pagan beliefs and practices, prevail? will be in nine cases out of ten couched in some such words as these: "The great mark of distinction lies in the treatment accorded to women and children, and in the life and spirit of the home. We have found nothing anywhere in the non-Christian world to compare with the home as we know it under the reign of the gospel."

3. Home, as outlined in the Bible at the beginning, was a place of fellowship and union between a man and a woman, joined by common tastes and services and adaptations by the Almighty in marriage. The current shocking theories of experimental marriage, free-love, communal rather than personal responsibility, care of children by the State, and other "liberal" and socialistic doctrines of that ilk, find no countenance in the Bible. In the early traditions in Genesis there are found a man and a woman—not a man and a harem of several females—united in this relationship. The fact of polygamy in the households of Abraham,

Jacob, David, and Solomon, which finds record in the Old Testament narrative, nowhere meets with the approval of Jehovah. In each instance where it exists it brings a tragedy with it, and no reasonable theory of biblical interpretation can attribute blame for its existence upon the Almighty. The jealousy and collisions and bitterness arising between Sarah and Hagar in the home of Abraham; the divisions in the home of Jacob, occasioned in part by his polygamous relations; the retributions of various sorts which smote David on account of his polygamous habits; and the disgrace plainly attributed to Solomon, who allowed in his old age his heathen wives to steal away his affections from the God of Israel, and whose last days are blighted with this fact, and who dies apparently in this apostate condition—these are all indications in the record that the divine law encouraged monogamy; and that it gave no countenance to plural marriages, as the Mormons call them in our time.

The further fact bearing on this question is the family life of the Hebrew people, who in spite of the so-called “examples” of their early leaders, have always been monogamous, and who have been noted everywhere for the purity and elevation of their home life, which has been copied after biblical ideals.

4. Glimpses of careless, easy-going, and envious habits in the home are given here and there in Scripture as warnings; and as such they speak in no uncertain manner to each successive age. When Lot, for instance, disregarding the wickedness of the

new neighborhood, the monstrous vices of the people, and their heathenish characteristics, and attracted only by the rich pasturage to be anticipated for his flocks and herds, and the opportunity thus afforded for gain, "pitched his tent toward Sodom," he invited domestic calamities and sore retribution which will never lose their edifying lessons for the world. In what solitary conspicuity stands Athaliah, whose son, Ahaziah, was one of the kings of Judah. The Book pinnacles her in bad preëminence when it tells us that "his mother was his counselor to do wickedly." How startlingly that single fact comes out of the nebulous and misty past as we study the record, and how this bit of history thus written down serves to warn us of the harm which a mother who is worldly, selfish, resentful, hateful, may do to her children by her spirit, her counsels, and her example. The cruel, imperious, and idolatrous Jezebel, her name to all time a synonym of the worst qualities of a perverted and loose-reined womanhood, stands in the record as an illustration of the evils that come to the palace, to the social circle, and to the nation where such a woman is the power behind the throne.

2 Chron. 22. 3

1 Kings ch. 21

5. Happily, such examples as these are rare in the Book. The women of the Bible are nearly all types of piety, industry, and devotion. Hannah, for example, is a beautiful specimen of the loving, humble, praying mother, casting her care on the Lord, imploring God's blessing and guidance for her offspring even before they are born, and by her solicitude and her maternal services and sympathies commending

1 Sam. ch. 1-3

herself to all who may profit by her example. What tender household ties, what common bonds of fidelity, bereavement, sympathy, and kindness are blended in the story of the Moabitess and her mother-in-law, that has come down to us as fresh in its beauty as a lily of the valley in springtime, the very heart of the story enshrined in the precious words of the one to the other in a critical hour of wretchedness and want:

Ruth 1. 16-18 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

6. Household discipline and filial affection are among the lofty ideals of family life embodied in the instructions of the Word. In the Decalogue it was commanded to Israel, "Honor thy father and thy mother"; while to this day in all Hebrew families the passage which they know as the "Shema" is recited by parents and children together:

Deut. 6. 4-9 Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

Among the utterances of Hebrew Wisdom are these:

Prov. 1. 8, 9 My son, hear the instruction of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:

For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head,
And chains about thy neck.

Hearken unto thy father that begat thee,
And despise not thy mother when she is old. Prov. 23. 22

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Eccl. 12. 1

The principles thus set forth found exemplification in the praise awarded to Abraham, of whom Jehovah is depicted as saying:

For I know him, that he will] command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. Gen. 18. 19

Joshua is represented as announcing this devout pledge of fealty for himself and his family: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh. 24. 15

The womanly ideals and occupations and charms pictured in the closing verses of Proverbs—cited in full at the end of this chapter—have value and interest not merely for the people for whom they were originally set forth, but for all generations. Thus in brief the Old Testament lessons concerning the home pass before us, all of them arrayed with indelible grace and beauty. It is no wonder, when we study these instructions and principles and examples, that the Jews have in all ages been noted for the piety and simplicity of their family life, for it has been built upon these enduring foundations.

7. In the New Testament these ideals are glorified at the opening of the story by the scenes at Bethlehem and at Nazareth. Poets and painters for many centuries have striven devoutly to reproduce these scenes, and they have not only added to the trophies

of artistic genius by their labors, but they have helped to people the imagination and heart of the world with the pictures they have painted—pictures of childhood and motherhood which have ennobled all life and added to the worth and to the opportunities of every generation that has been born since the Babe of Bethlehem nestled in the manger. Every child in the world to-day has a larger inheritance and looks up into a brighter sky because the Word became flesh and dwelt among men, and walked the earth in garments of poverty and toil. Life has a new meaning, childhood and womanhood have a new value and beauty through the Incarnation, and homes everywhere are brightened by the light which illumines the ages, shining from the Virgin and her Child.

John 1. 14 And, later in the record, when Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of his disciples and said, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me," and when he instanced the spirit of a little child as the type of docility and love to be exemplified in conversion, and when he uttered his invitation, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me"—in all these cases he opened new possibilities for childhood in all ages and lands.

Our Lord's relation to social joys and fellowships and to the life of the household as revealed in his friendships and his daily habits during his ministry is suggestive. The institution of marriage, as we are told in the wedding ceremony which has come down to us from remote ages hallowed by centuries

Matt. 18. 2-6

Mark 9. 36, 37

10. 13-15

Matt. 19. 14

of blest associations, was "by his presence and first miracle that he wrought at **Cana of Galilee** adorned and beautified"; and more than once the record shows that he who could fitly share the gladness of the festal occasion could also weep with those who weep. His spirit of compassion, for example, shown toward a sorrowing woman was typified at the gates of Nain, where he raised from the dead a young man—"the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." At Bethany, in the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, he frequently found respite and welcome on his journeys, his communion with that domestic circle standing out in the record as a luminous instance of the engaging social habits of the Son of man. At the cross, burdened with the agonies of atonement, and struggling in the horror of great darkness which for a time immured his soul, he turned his eyes toward his anguish-stricken mother, who knelt on the earth, and commended her to the care of his beloved disciple—"Woman, behold thy son!" Nor were the little ones forgotten by the Master when he came to take final leave of his flock of disciples, for one of his parting commissions was spoken to Peter, and to the Church through him: "Feed my lambs." What wisdom is found in Paul's instructions: "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

John 2. 1-12

Luke 7. 11-17

10. 38-42

John 12. 1-8

John 19. 25-
27

John 21. 15

Eph. 6. 4

Col. 3. 21

8. With these examples and teachings before them, it is not strange that the early Church, in apostolic times and later, attracted the attention of the heathen

world by the purity of its home life, the intelligence and refinement of its women folk, and the sweetness and filial devotion exhibited by its children. And in our own day, when the word "home" and the blessings suggested by it mean so much—crowded with joys unknown except in this realm of life—is it not increasingly evident that we are indebted to the Scripture for this great heritage of domestic privilege and happiness? A home where the Bible is loved and obeyed, where prayer is daily offered, where Christ is exalted in song and in worship, where spiritual fellowship crowns and sanctifies all other bonds, where light from scriptural promises shines alike on the hoary head and on the unconscious beauty of childhood—a home like that at Bethany, where Jesus was a welcome guest, a home where comfort from on high is assured in bereavement and in other times of anxiety and trial—such an institution has its source and roots in the Bible, in the conceptions of parental duty, of filial affection, and of loving service which make up a goodly portion of its celestial charms.

F

CHAPTER XII
BIBLICAL IDEALS: GOD AND MAN

A virtuous woman who can find?
 For her price is far above rubies.
 The heart of her husband trusteth in her,
 And he shall have no lack of gain.
 She doeth him good and not evil
 All the days of her life.
 She seeketh wool and flax,
 And worketh willingly with her hands.
 She is like the merchant-ships;
 She bringeth her food from afar.
 She riseth also while it is yet night,
 And giveth meat to her household,
 And their task to her maidens.
 She considereth a field, and buyeth it:
 With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
 She girdeth her loins with strength,
 And maketh strong her arms.
 She perceiveth that her merchandise is profitable:
 Her lamp goeth not out by night.
 She layeth her hands to the distaff,
 And her hands hold the spindle.
 She spreadeth out her hand to the poor;
 Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
 She is not afraid of the snow for her household;
 For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
 She maketh for herself carpets of tapestry;
 Her clothing is fine linen and purple.
 Her husband is known in the gates,
 When he sitteth among the elders of the land.
 She maketh linen garments and selleth them;
 And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
 Strength and dignity are her clothing;
 And she laugheth at the time to come.
 She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
 And the law of kindness is on her tongue.
 She looketh well to the ways of her household,
 And eateth not the bread of idleness.
 Her children rise up, and call her blessed;
 Her husband also, and he praiseth her, saying:
 Many daughters have done virtuously,
 But thou excellest them all.
 Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain:
 But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.
 Give her of the fruit of her hands;
 And let her works praise her in the gates.

—Prov. 31. 10-31.

CHAPTER XII

BIBLICAL IDEALS: GOD AND MAN

THERE remain to be noted some of the fundamental ideals of Scripture on which generations of men, in many lands, have been building their highest achievements of doctrine and daily living, and to which we owe an inestimable debt in view of the shaping force thus exerted on our characters and aims.

1. One of these conceptions, lying at the very base of all noble living, is the idea and ideal of God which we find in the Bible. That ideal, it should be kept in mind, is not found in any one section or book in its entirety. The revelation of God's character and relationship to man is gradually given; it is a growth—it resembles "the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 4. 18 Those who ignore this principle of the gradual development of doctrine in the Scripture, who search through the Hexateuch for instances of a low moral standard prevalent among the early Hebrews, and who gloat over the strange commands therein found as alleged to have come from Jehovah, and then malign the "God of the Old Testament" as a cruel and monstrous being, unworthy of reverence and worship, thereby fall into lamentable error. To understand the God of the Bible we must take into consideration that he had to shape his instructions and his revelations of himself

to the childish comprehensions of the people of a primitive time. Even in our own day when parents give their first instructions concerning the Supreme Being to their little ones they frequently use the term "the Good Man" to symbolize the Creator. They use language and similes and stories suitable to the naive mind of childhood. Bearing this principle in mind, and reflecting also on the fact that the Hebrews were accustomed to attribute directly to the personal agency of Jehovah all things that happen in human experience—impressions on the mind, dreams of the night, visions in the darkness, thunders in the sky, earthquakes—we may reasonably interpret some of the commands and acts ascribed to Jehovah in that early portion of the record so as not to cast a blemish on the moral character of the Divine Being. At any rate, whether or not the difficulties referred to can all be cleared up, it should be evident to any man of discernment that it is not reasonable to take a few instances out of the primitive records and on them as the sole basis construct a picture of the character of the Hebrew Jehovah. In order to acquaint ourselves with him we should search through the whole Book, comparing scripture with scripture, noting the increasing light which shines on the divine character and administration from generation to generation, until in the New Testament his Fatherhood is fully unfolded.

While in the Pentateuch, and in the books which closely follow in the record, God is revealed largely as a mysterious and awful Sovereign, yet there are

noble hints here and there of his tender care, his gentle sympathies, his loving nature. What an exquisite touch is given to Abraham's relations with Jehovah when it is related that the patriarch was called the friend of God! With what compassion is the declaration made by the Almighty to the Israelites in Egypt: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people, . . . and have heard their cry; I know their sorrows, . . . and I am come down to deliver them"! What comfort is lodged in an assurance like this: "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; in paths that they have not known will I lead them"! With what impressiveness and skill the majestic power of the Most High is yoked with his condescending care in the words:

Isa. 41. 8

Exod. 3. 7, 8

Isa. 42. 16

He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
 He healeth the broken in heart,
 And bindeth up their wounds.
 He counteth the number of the stars;
 He giveth them all their names!

Psa. 147. 2-4

These are not sporadic passages, hidden out of sight in the old record; they are characteristic teachings, and might be matched by scores of similar utterances which serve to unfold, age after age, the merciful attributes of the God of Israel.

2. In the New Testament the Fatherhood of the Almighty, moreover, is clearly and constantly set forth. When the Master speaks of God he nearly always calls him "your Father," and his divine compassion toward his children is illustrated in the Saviour's teachings by his care for the birds, the lil-

ies, and the grass. Paul uses the comprehensive and tender terms, "the God of patience," "the God of hope," "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort," to suggest to us the loving and forbearing qualities which belong to him. These citations, and hosts of others which might be culled out of the pages of the Book, should suffice to indicate the unreasonable attitude of those who judge the Almighty by a few instances of apparent cruelty found in the earlier Scriptures, and refuse to take into consideration the whole broad record in which there is a gradual revelation of the ineffable perfections and tender mercies of our Father in heaven.

3. Much space is given in the Bible to the various attributes of Jehovah. It would require many pages of this volume to reproduce the passages which set forth his character and administration. Perhaps it will be possible to give a compact and vivid portrayal of some phases of his manifold being by citing a single terse utterance or two to indicate some of these delineations as biblical writers have conceived and pictured them:

Psa. 147. 5
Prov. 21. 30
Jer. 32. 17

Omnipotence: Great is our Lord, and mighty in power. . . . There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord. . . . Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and by thy stretched-out arm: there is nothing too hard for thee.

Jer. 23. 24
Psa. 139. 1, 2
Prov. 15. 3
Psa. 147. 5

Omnipresence and Omniscience: Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. . . . O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. . . . Thou understandest my thought afar off. . . . The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. . . . His understanding is infinite.

Justice and Holiness: Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. . . . The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. . . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? . . . The heavens are not clean in his sight. . . . Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

Mercy, Loving-kindness: Thy loving-kindness is better than life. . . . Oh how great is thy goodness. . . . He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. . . . He keepeth covenant and mercy. . . . God is love.

Psa. 89. 14
145. 17
Gen. 18. 25
Job 15. 15
Isa. 6. 3
Psa. 63. 3
31. 19
Zech. 2. 8
Deut. 7. 9
1 John 4. 8

The stern, implacable, and imperious God of arbitrary power, but little better than an enthroned Fate, worshiped by the Mohammedans; the hideous aggregation of deities found in the Hindu triad and in other pagan faiths; the gods and goddesses of ancient polytheism, seated on Olympus, with their jealousies, their plots, their stupendous vices and habitual cruelties—we can hardly contrast these alleged deities, even in our thought, for one moment with the God of the Bible, without stopping to ask the Almighty's pardon for our seeming irreverence.

Furthermore, how can we for one moment in reason compare the God whom we worship as our Father in heaven with the mysterious Some-Thing-or-Other with which pantheism fills the universe, or with the inscrutable Force which, according to Herbert Spencer, and others who accept his doctrines, lies back of all visible and material phenomena? Turning from all these supposed manifestations of deity we may reverently cry out: Lord, Thou art great, and greatly to be praised, and thy greatness is unsearchable! In thy kingdom thou rulest over all. Thou art the King eternal, immortal, invisible, and

thou art also our Father, our Comforter, our Redeemer! Blessed be thy name for evermore.

4. The biblical ideals of life command attention also, along with the ideals of God's character which we have been studying.

According to the old Roman sages and popular standards the highest ideals of character were strenuous, martial, imperious. The best man in their view was the man of strength, the champion in the arena, the conqueror of a province, the winner of a triumphal procession and its attendant honors. So captivated were the Roman people by the pomp, the glory, and the power of palace, and court, and field, that they in their thought and in their temples elevated those who had been distinguished in these realms to a supposed rank of deity after death.

Different ideals of character and achievement prevailed among the Greeks, who exalted physical beauty, mental alertness, intellectual ability, success in the sciences and the arts—in a word, whatever might be compacted into the term "wisdom," which in their view had but a limited scope. The man who could argue in the school of logic, solve problems in mathematics, carve a noble statue, erect a magnificent temple, win a prize in the Grecian games—he was a man worth while!

There have been limited regions where political success filled the measure of men's thoughts as the highest sign of human greatness. The typical big man in such a case is the man who has won an office, who can be called King, or President, or Governor,

or even by some less pretentious title. And it must be added that the highest ideal which many in our day have cherished is furnished by the title multi-millionaire!

Very different is the ideal of human greatness presented in the Bible. Some of the elements of the biblical ideal of character and life commended and commanded in the Book may be very briefly outlined.

5. One of them is prayerfulness. In every true life, according to the teachings and examples of the Scripture, prayer must have a fundamental place. The good man must be in touch with his Father by daily fellowship of thought and purpose; he must be able to lay his needs and cares before that Father all the while, and when necessary tell him, as a child may tell his earthly parent, his anxieties, his wants, his deepest desires and longings, and his consciousness of sin, failure, and ill-desert. He will ask for something when needed, and will be ready to get along without it if his Father does not see fit to grant what is besought. Thus his life of prayer will be not a mere chronic effort to "get something" from God by persistent supplication, but rather an experience of inward fellowship, a reaching out of the soul after God's help and grace, a submission of the soul to the will of the Father, moment by moment, and grateful acceptance of the gifts which come from on high.

6. Trustfulness is a further factor of the life enjoined in Scripture. The man who prays will also have faith—faith in God's wisdom, goodness, and

Psa. 31. 15

helpful care. His inward cry will often find expression in the psalmist's words, "My times are in thy hand." In prosperity or in privation, in periods of success and in experiences of failure and defeat, he will still say, "The Lord will provide." Sometimes he may be able to see and declare, as he reflects upon past perils and sorrows and persecutions, what Joseph testified, looking back to his days of wretchedness and servitude and exile—"The Lord meant it for good." And in every emergency, even the worst, while in the path of duty, he will be able to say, "The Lord is my helper: I will not fear."

Gen. 50. 20

Heb. 13. 6

Prov. 20. 4
6. 11
12. 24

2 Thess. 3. 10,

11
1 Tim. 5. 13
Rom. 12. 11
John 9. 4

7. Industrious application to one's daily duties is an added element in the biblical ideal of life. Throughout the book of Proverbs the indolent man is admonished concerning the wickedness and danger of his habits. "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing." He is further warned in this alarming utterance: "So shall thy poverty come as a robber, and thy want as an armed man." On the other side of the case, we are assured that the hand of the diligent shall bear rule. Against tattlers, busybodies, and idlers Paul directs his sharp rebukes, and he also urges that the believer must be not slothful in diligence, but fervent in spirit, as he serves the Lord; while the Master cries out, feeling the pressure of opportunity, "We must work . . . while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

8. Courage, furthermore, is set before us as a cardinal virtue. More than a score of times is the rousing

admonition spoken to God's leaders or to his warring hosts: "Be strong, and of a good courage; fear not; quit yourselves like men!" We are not summoned in Scripture to a serene, mystical, easy-going life, nor is the ascetic, brooding, and dreamy mood, as exemplified in certain Oriental forms of religion, encouraged in the Bible. The battle cries of Saint Paul, "Endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," "Put on the whole armor of God," "Be not weary in well-doing," "As we have opportunity, let us work," are full of urgency, ardor, and desperate earnestness. The soldierly and virile phases of character and activity in his writings are kept well to the front. The ideal man, as pictured in the Scripture, is not a complaisant, spiritless, anæmic creature, by any means. He has red blood in his veins; he is a good hater as well as a good lover; he has learned to abhor that which is evil; to him life is a conflict, on which eternal issues depend. Reformers and martyrs in countless hosts have revealed these elements of character, and thus embodied before the ages the heroic element, which, incarnate in so many biblical examples, forms a constituent in the combination of traits that make up ideal Christian manhood.

9. Service is another element in the biblical conception of life as it is embodied in great examples, and illumined by the spirit of the Master. He who went about doing good is set forth as the one to be emulated; as he stoops to perform the act of a menial he says to his disciples, "I have given you an example." His ministry was crowded with deeds of compassion,

2 Tim. 2. 3
Eph. 6. 11
Gal. 6. 9, 10

Rom. 12. 9

Acts 10. 38

John 13. 15

each one of which was a parable in action, intended to prompt imitation. In his picture of the judgment he sets those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the prisoner, and welcomed and cared for the needy and forlorn, on the right hand, to be rewarded for their merciful ministrations. The privilege of helping men into the kingdom is urged upon us by two great passages, which are luminous with suggestiveness and encouragement: "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever"; "He who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." The great commission spoken by the Master before his ascension was intended not for his apostles alone, but for his followers, his universal Church: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, . . . to the whole creation. . . . Go, make disciples of all nations; . . . ye shall be my witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth." The duty is therefore laid not on a few but on the many to proclaim, either in person or by proxy, to the whole world the glad tidings of salvation through Christ.

The followers of Christ are just awaking to their duty to render "social service" to the unfortunate, to rescue the outcast, to help the deserving poor, to alleviate the condition of the prisoner, to shepherd the lost, to go after the erring, to remedy as far as they can the inequities and the injustices that are current, and to embody in daily life and in practical

Matt. 25. 31-
46

Dan. 12. 13
James 5. 20

Mark 16. 15
Matt. 28. 19
Luke 24. 46
Acts 1. 18

helpfulness the doctrine that God is our Father and that we are all brethren.

Loving, self-sacrificing brotherly service to others, based upon and reproducing in substance that which our Lord rendered during his record on the earth—this is an essential phase of the ideal life which is set before us in the Bible to be translated into speech and into action.

10. Two additional far-reaching and engaging traits, which cohere fitly in a symmetrical character, and which have separate and yet harmonious activities—patience and hope—have their place in the ideal life as enjoined in the Bible.

“Ye have need of patience”; “Let patience have her perfect work”—here are two out of many commands which urge upon us this culminating virtue, which gives a coronal beauty to every other grace in human character. Substantially the Bible says in many passages what Longfellow has put into one of his lines:

Heb. 10. 36
James 1. 4

“Learn to labor and to wait.”

In that adage is one of the secrets of perfect victory.

And meanwhile, during the stress and tumult, the tempest and the night, the Book continually says in one form or another, “Be of good cheer; hope in the Lord.” To him who trusts in God, who faithfully attends to his duty, who toils on in his mission, better days are sure to come. His best times are always ahead of him, no matter what may happen temporarily to cloud his sky and to delay the hour of victory. Far away in the dim distance, in the un-

Gal. 6. 9

known future, but surely provided for him, is the fulfillment of the promise: "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Girded, therefore, and undergirded, by these two invincible factors of success, hope and patience, the lover and follower of Christ is stayed and buoyed up for conflict or suffering.

Is not the ideal life, outlined thus from Scripture, an attractive and arousing conception? Is not the Bible enhanced in value, in human interest, and in beauty as well, when we find it enshrining this composite and glorious picture of what a man ought to be during his stay on earth?

Prayer, trustfulness, industry, courage, brotherly service, patience, hope—where in creation may we find a worthier or more winning combination of gentle and virile graces than these?

CHAPTER XIII
THE APPEAL TO THE INTELLECT

I write unto you, my little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him which is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him which is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

—1 John 2. 12-17.

Lamp of our feet, whereby we trace
Our path when wont to stray;
Stream from the fount of heavenly grace,
Brook by the traveler's way;
Bread of our souls, whereon we feed;
True manna from on high;
Our guide and chart, wherein we read
Of realms beyond the sky;
Pillar of fire, through watches dark,
And radiant cloud by day;
When waves would whelm our tossing bark,
Our anchor and our stay:
Word of the everlasting God,
Will of his glorious Son,
Without thee, how could earth be trod,
Or heaven itself be won?
Lord, grant us all aright to learn
The wisdom it imparts;
And to its heavenly teaching turn,
With simple, childlike hearts.

—Bernard Barton.

CHAPTER XIII

THE APPEAL TO THE INTELLECT

WHAT has the Bible to do with the intellectual growth of the world, with educational progress, and with the spread of the highest forms of culture? What appeal does it make to intelligent and discerning minds? What relation has it sustained to the institutions which have elevated, informed, and guided the ruling intellects from age to age? These are some of the questions which need to be answered in order to determine certain phases of the attractive force exerted by this Book. Our answers must necessarily be short and suggestive, rather than elaborate and complete.

Turning back for the moment to the age when printing became one of the new forces of civilization and enlightenment, we find the first publication of the Scriptures occupying a preëminent place of influence and revolutionary power. The sixteenth century was just completing its first quarter when the New Testament in German, in French, and in English issued from the press. No other event of that period can for a moment be compared in importance with that threefold publication. And as the Bible thus early in the history of printing became a beacon light, heralding the progress of discovery and pioneering the pathway of the teacher, so it has con-

tinued to occupy a foremost place in the educational world. It has never lost the primacy thus emphasized. Of no other book except the Bible can it be said that it has been translated, in whole or in part, into more than five hundred languages and dialects, and literally scattered abroad among all tribes and nations on the face of the earth.

As a standard of usage in our own tongue it has an authority and influence which are supreme, while it has stimulated the best writers and afforded a source from which to cite apt phrases and felicitous rhetorical allusions and illustrations to a degree which has put it beyond reach of all other books of the kind in existence. Nearly all great schools in our own country, in Great Britain, and in Europe have been founded and maintained avowedly in the primary interest of what is distinctively called Christian education, by men who had been trained to study, to love, and to exalt the Bible.

This contention as to the primacy of the English Bible among the agencies which arouse, quicken, and guide the mind in its aspirations and conclusions cannot reasonably be challenged. The question, then, comes up for brief consideration: What elements in the Book possess this specific illumining and awakening function? How does it come that the Scripture has been a beacon light to the ages, that it has pioneered the way of the thinker, the explorer, the inventor, the student, and that it has won for itself a position unquestioned among the intellectual forces of the world?

1. At least the beginning of an answer to these inquiries is afforded when we consider the educating value of fellowship with great writers. A book written by a man of genius, and read by a susceptible inquiring student—hence begins a new career. Many an illustrious leader has traced his intellectual birth, his first notable victory over hitherto baffling obstacles, his start toward the kingdom, to his contact with a great volume. Many readers of these lines will recall with a thrill of gratitude the hour when for the first time they became acquainted with, perhaps, the nature poems of Wordsworth, or the majestic characteristics of *Paradise Lost*, or when they first read a great novel—*The Cloister and the Hearth*, *David Copperfield*, *Les Misérables*, or *Vanity Fair*. One of the most eminent of American teachers, for years at the head of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, often told how he had been led in his boyhood to take up the study of the natural sciences, in which he became a leading American authority, by reading a science primer which by chance fell into his hands in his teens. The effect upon his life and plans was immediate and revolutionary. He was at once transplanted into a new intellectual world, and his mind underwent a complete renovation.

Communion with the masterful minds whose works are collected in the Old and New Testaments is one of the secrets of the influence which the Book exerts over those who are susceptible to such contact. Apart from the ministry of the truths contained in these books, there is a stimulating effect wrought

upon the minds of those who trace in the productions of such writers as Isaiah, Amos, David, Moses, and Paul the mental operations, the tastes, the native bent, the literary or logical gifts, the heart-yearnings, the inner visions, and the ground basis of noble character which underlie and make possible their work in the Scripture. Being dead, these men yet live, not merely in the books which incorporate their revelations of truth, but in the throbbing heart-beats which palpitate throughout their writings.

2. Furthermore, the task of grappling with great thoughts, of pursuing difficult arguments, of dealing with vast themes, of studying a volume into which a mighty soul has poured without stint its very life-currents, brings with it intellectual recuperation and growth in amazing measure. The wrestler, in order to develop his thews and sinews, needs to tug with an antagonist tough, and alert, and strong. A student or reader who is content with easy tasks, who never undertakes a large achievement, who chooses for himself lines of study which never rouse his energies to their fullest exercise—what can be expected of him?

The themes treated in the Bible are the noblest, most commanding, most fundamental to be found in literature: Who, or what, lies back of the things which we see and hear and feel? How did this universe of order, beauty, and magnificence come into being? Whence came the human race? Whither are we drifting? What is there in man besides flesh and blood? What lies beyond death and the

grave? How shall a depraved man regain mastery of himself? By what means shall the heart be renewed, the conscience clarified and cleansed, the life made over again? How shall the superstitions, the cruelties, the poverty and degradations which through countless ages have burdened savage and barbaric lands be removed? How shall the race be made over again into a life of purity and peace? How shall we expedite the coming of the glad day when man shall be in cordial touch with his brother man the wide world over? Here are the fundamental questions of the centuries. They are discussed, illumined, argued, in part solved, in the Bible. For these problems there is absolutely no solution except that which the Bible furnishes, or helps us toward. The student who studies these greatest of all themes as they are treated in Scripture, who learns from that Book their nature, importance, and bearing, finds not only light and knowledge, but an intellectual renewal, and upbuilding, and discipline of an extraordinary kind.

3. The prescriptions of the Word looking in the direction of mental and moral culture are many. We have already cited some of the directions given to the ancient Hebrews bidding them teach the law diligently to their children—rules which were from remote times carefully followed in the home and in the schools of the synagogue. Concerning mental discipline of a more general sort the utterances of the book of Proverbs are pertinent, urging men to seek for wisdom and instruction, to increase in learning,

to attain unto sound counsels, and declaring that wisdom is the principal thing. Who can read the opening chapters of this sagacious and penetrating book without being impressed with the lofty intellectual ideals which it embodies and commands? For many centuries the Bible has urged home upon men the truth that it is only the foolish who refuse to be instructed, who are willing to live in ignorance. The directions found in the Bible enforcing the duty of religious application—bidding men to keep the heart with all diligence, to consider their ways, to remember that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—inevitably involve mental discipline, the regulation of the thoughts, the government of the reason, and the quest of secular as well as religious knowledge. So far as the teachings of Saint Paul are concerned, there is a single passage which has in it the fundamental principles of educational science, both in theory and practice:

Phil. 4. 8, 9

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

What wise advice in this respect he gives to his son in the gospel:

1 Tim. 4. 13-15

Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee. . . . Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching.

No man could write thus without holding and inculcating a noble ideal for the cultivation of the intellectual life.

4. The teachings of the Bible, again, concerning the mental and moral structure of man's complicated nature are fraught with incitements and helps for intellectual advancement. The psychology of the Bible is singularly free from errors. The admonitions which the Book gives—directed to reason, imagination, memory, heart, conscience, and will—need no correction in order to apply to our current needs. The more closely we study the nature of man as delineated in the Scripture, the clearer will be our insight into the divine wisdom which marks that delineation, and our apprehension also of the intimate relation sustained in the philosophy of the Bible, and in its application to daily life, between the religion of the heart and the culture of the intellect.

5. An additional fact bears on this theme—namely, that there comes very often in human experience, along with a new religious experience, a quickening of the mental faculties and the mental life. Any college teacher can give testimony concerning this phenomenon as he has had occasion to study it in his daily observations. He has seen an unpromising, indolent, careless, perhaps vicious lad wrought upon by an awakening influence and brought in a single day to give up his vices, his lazy proclivities, turn completely around and become a diligent, devout, and alert student. There has come to the lad not only a new birth for his religious nature but also a new

birth for his intellect. Almost at once there are revealed mental aptitudes, quickened faculties, aspirations after better things, not known in the lad's history up to that day of his conversion. And the change does not pass away as the whim of an hour or the fad of a year. The boy's inner life, of mind and soul, has passed through a genuine renaissance. New motives, new insight, new appreciation of the value of time, a new sense of responsibility, a fresh zeal for knowledge, and a changed outlook on time and eternity—all this sometimes takes place as an accompaniment of conversion.

The case of John Bunyan may be cited as suggesting the extraordinary influence which a deep religious experience exerts upon the whole intellectual nature. There was surely nothing in the environment, habits, training, native proclivities, or home life of Bunyan as a lad to indicate that the fires of genius were slumbering in his breast. Did anyone who knew him when he was an illiterate vagrant ever fancy for a moment that this young tinker lad had any native talents of a remarkable type? He would have remained in vagrancy and ignorance but for the experience of grace which saved him from his sins, introduced him into a new fellowship, quickened all his intellectual and moral powers, and not only renewed but transfigured his manhood.

Milton's case is somewhat different, but it illustrates the same principle. As a lad he cherished high intellectual ideals, saw in his visions the peaks of poetical achievement which he aspired to climb,

and diligently cultivated all the agencies of scholarship in order to secure the best culture of the time. But his motives, his ruling aims, his inner life, the very atmosphere in which he moved—all these were religious. It is simply the truth to say that he never would, and never could, have written his great poetry without the help which religious devotion afforded.

Many instances might be cited from the realm of hymnology showing that the poetic faculty lay almost dormant till it was roused in the breast of the newborn believer in Jesus Christ by the grace that had induced penitence and grateful love. Newton, Cowper, and Charles Wesley are types of this truth. But for their religious experience they could hardly have reached celebrity with their pens.

A single tribute from a man who was certainly not biased in favor of the usual orthodox type of doctrine or "the current ecclesiasticism" may be cited as furnishing from an unquestioned source the judgment of one who looked at things from the standpoint of an historian, a critic, a philosopher—the late Right Hon. W. E. H. Lecky, author of two great books, the *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, and the *History of European Morals*. In his *Democracy and Liberty* he says:

It is difficult to exaggerate the moral advantage of an early and complete familiarity with the biblical writings. Such familiarity seldom fails to do something to purify, exalt, elevate, and regulate the character, to exalt the imagination, to color the whole texture of a life. Even on its purely intellectual side its value is very great. It may be truly said that the pure, simple, and lofty language of the English Bible has done more than any other single influence to

refine the taste of the great masses of the English people. It is the most powerful antidote to vulgarity of thought and feeling.

And fitly chiming in with this declaration comes a quotation from Dr. Charles A. Briggs, in his *Biblical Study: Its Principles, Methods, and History*:

Biblical study is the most attractive of all studies. The variety of topic, richness of material, beauty of form, wealth of illustration, the vast importance of its themes, the unity in which the amazing variety of author, age, and topic is bound together—all make the Bible the most interesting and absorbing study for peasant and prince, for child and sage, for all the world. . . . The Bible is a book of life, a real book, a people's book. It is a blessed means of grace when used in devotional hours; it has also holy lessons and beauties of thought and sentiment for hours of leisure and recreation. It appeals to the æsthetic and intellectual as well as moral and spiritual faculties, the whole man in his whole life.

This, by the way, is the testimony of a man who has had the advantage of foreign study and travel, of the widest culture, and who has been a student and a teacher of the Scriptures since his young manhood.

6. It may be further remarked that men who have spent their lives in biblical research, and who are masters of its learning, furnish to the world a type of scholarship, of alert and refined manhood, of intellectual preëminence, not surpassed in all the wide realms of culture. The man who has become an authority in the lexicography, the literature, the geography, the archæology, the linguistics, or the exposition of the Bible—so that it may be said of him that he knows in his peculiar field all that can be known by one man, and is still learning—is usually

as fine a type of character as the modern world can show. Among men of this type who are gone let the names of Philip Schaff, Edwards A. Park, James Strong, Henry M. Harman, A. B. Davidson, and George P. Fisher be recalled; and among those whose light still shines, think of William Sanday, George Adam Smith, William F. Warren, Francis L. Patton: what profession, what sphere of research, what realm of intellectual achievement can furnish men to surpass such specimens of all-round, full-orbed, magnificent manhood? Then consider this truth: these men owed their development, their refined tastes, their surpassing manhood in fullest degree to their devotion as students and teachers to the Bible. That Book was the chief agency in making them, to cite Paul's phrase, "full-grown men."

7. The field of biblical inquiry, it must be kept in mind, is no narrow, sectarian, controversial domain. The man who has in any genuine sense of the term mastered the Bible must know many cognate branches of learning—ethics, psychology, philosophy, history, poetry, literature, sociology, the annals of ancient and modern exploration and discovery, the Hebrew and Greek tongues as well as the modern languages—for these all have their roots and ramifications in the Scripture. A field of study, therefore, so vast and fruitful, that can furnish to the world the finest types of educated manhood to be found anywhere, commends itself thereby for its fructifying, renewing, edifying power.

Were we to ask such men as those of whom we have

just been writing, the question, "What has the Bible done for your mind? What has the gospel done for your intellectual powers? What help has religion ministered to you in your search after culture, and in your achievements in scholastic pursuits?" the replies would be immediate and full of grateful recognition. They might possibly run somewhat after this fashion: "The religion of the Bible has given me great thoughts to deal with; it has set before me magnificent intellectual models who have served to waken the spirit of emulation in my breast; it has purified my imagination, and given it wings of strength to fly through spacious regions of research; it has peopled my mind with glorious ideals of character and achievement, with stimulating conceptions, revealing lofty possibilities for myself and for the human race; through prayer it has brought light on the path of duty, light into my often puzzled brain, light in the study of the Word and the works of God; it has exalted my life with its noble fellowships, and introduced me into a company of refined, intelligent, cultivated spirits, with kindred tastes, a common love for the Bible, and a joint interest in the service of the King, uniting us in blessed communion; it has given me steadfastness of purpose, a stronger will-power, a vaster horizon, a loftier outlook and uplook, which have increasingly ennobled life. These are some of the benefits, aspirations, and inspirations which the Bible has brought to me as an intellectual being."

The personal influence of such a cultivated soul as

we have been delineating, in the community where he lives, is often an extraordinary element in its social and civic life,—apart from the work which he may do in his vocation as teacher, pastor, or editor. One such man—by his winsome ways, his refined tastes, his broad horizon, wit, humor, love for letters, his luminous and edifying conversation, his *bonhomie*, his devotion to the things which are worth while—in due time is recognized as *facile princeps* in each circle in which he moves. He becomes a radiating center of illumination, a leavening power, a chief agency of beneficence, whereby childhood is ennobled and youth exalted in its aims, inert souls stimulated, ignoble ambitions changed, and all the life of the community transfigured. The daily walk and conversation of one such man is an inestimable treasure to his neighborhood.

In view of these phases of the ministry of the Scripture to the higher life of the world, can there be a serious question on the part of the well-informed concerning the educating, enlightening, mind-disciplining function of the Bible? And is not this function of the gospel one of its world-illuminating charms?

CHAPTER XIV
CREDENTIALS

Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where abidest thou? He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour. One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). And he brought him unto Jesus.

—John 1. 35-42.

I love the sacred Book of God!
No other can its place supply;
It points me to his own abode;
It gives me wings and bids me fly.
Sweet Book! in thee my eyes discern
The very image of my Lord;
From thine instructive page I learn
The joys his presence will afford.
While I am here these leaves supply
His place, and tell me of his love;
I read with faith's discerning eye,
And gain a glimpse of joys above!

—Thomas Kelly.

CHAPTER XIV

CREDENTIALS

ONE of the remarkable traits of the Bible is the variety of arguments and testimonies which have been convincingly used to demonstrate its super-human authority and influence. Not by one line of persuasives or one body of proofs alone, but by many, have the nations been convinced that the Book contains God's revelation of himself and his grace to the world. The multiplicity and culminating force of these evidences, when duly considered, are extraordinary features of the Scriptures.

The dependence placed on these various arguments used to defend the authoritative character of the Book varies in different ages. Attacks are made upon the Bible now from one quarter and again from another; and accordingly the lines of defense shift from time to time. Arguments which were effective in one age become obsolescent, and in the course of time new proofs appear, or old ones are modified to meet the exigencies of the hour, or fresh emphasis is put upon this or that phase of what the theologians call the "apologetical discussion."

A suggestion is needed here that ordinary readers, in meeting the term just used, are liable to be led astray because of the current use of the word "apology." This term in connection with biblical matters

is used in its strong literal sense—a defense—not a regretful or timid excuse. The science of “apologetics” is devoted to defending, not apologizing for, the Bible, and its aim is to set forth the grounds on which the Scriptures are believed to contain a message from God and a sufficient rule for our faith and practice. It has grown in our time to be a very extensive branch of biblical learning. Those who have not recently examined this phase of inquiry will find upon giving their attention to it that it is a task of large significance and import to become acquainted with the phase of biblical science thus suggested. The scholarly equipment, for instance, needed for the preparation of such a work as “Apologetics; or, Christianity Defensively Stated,” by the late Professor A. B. Bruce, of the Free Church College, Glasgow, or such a book as “The Divine Origin of Christianity Indicated by its Historical Effects,” by the late Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs—two of the ablest and most complete works on the subject written in our day—can hardly be overstressed. Such books as these could not have been written by men of ordinary attainments. The vast knowledge needed in the case, the varied fields of research with which the authors of such books must be familiar, the insight, the logical acumen, the spirit of tolerance, the straightforward, truth-seeking aim, required by such colossal tasks as are enshrined in these volumes, can be merely hinted at, not defined. Those who deal, therefore, with the Bible flippantly, who fancy that with an offhand argument, a supercilious objec-

tion, or an arrogant assumption, they can easily set aside the claims of Scripture, and settle its authority with a sneer or an attempt at witticism, are sorely—we might better say, tragically—mistaken. The man who assumes that without scholarly preparation he can set out even to discuss intelligently the great facts on which the proofs of the Bible's authority rest, who fancies that he can satisfy the claims of reason and truth by lightly or imperiously brushing aside the work of the centuries which has been aggregated into the science of apologetics, makes himself by his folly a laughingstock.

The questions before us are: Does the Scripture contain a true revelation of God's character and will? Is its unfolding of the actual condition and needs of man correct? Does it afford us a pathway out of sin and sorrow and peril into fellowship with God? Does it reveal an assured hope of immortality? Does it proclaim a system of perfect morality, of brotherly kindness, of duty and destiny, which betokens a divine origin and a superhuman author? Do we find in the Book, throughout, signs of a wisdom, a searching insight, a compassion, a power, far above anything that man himself can possibly originate? To these questions, which are of practical importance to the ordinary reader of the Word, a discerning answer is due.

There has been, as suggested, a change of front on the part of the defenders of the faith in recent years. The old arguments have in part been held in reserve and fresh methods of indicating the reasons why men

accept the Bible as containing a divine revelation have been put into skillful use. The slightest glance at late volumes devoted to the "evidences of Christianity," as the phrase used to run, will show a changed line of argument made in view of the changed viewpoints and current needs of Bible students. The so-called "proofs" which were reckoned fifty or a hundred years ago as adequate receive less prominence, and other facts and phases of the Book which were then but scantily stressed are now brought to the foreground. A brief rehearsal of the arguments which unite in their testimony that the Bible contains the final revelation of God's character and gracious purpose, and that it speaks with superhuman authority to the human race concerning matters of faith, doctrine, and duty, may help us to see how manifold and convincing are these persuasives in their culminating force.

A single remark is worth while in advance of this rehearsal. It is very seldom that a man is brought to believe in the Bible or to accept Jesus Christ as a divine Redeemer by argument alone. People do not usually accept the Bible because some method of argumentation has persuaded them that it is inspired, or because they have been convinced by logical processes that it contains a divine revelation. In most cases acquaintance with the logical proofs *follows* the acceptance of the Bible as God's Word; the study of apologetics does not usually precede that acceptance. The lines of argument which show that it is reasonable to accept the Bible as a true and

reliable book of doctrine, a guide to religion, filled with blessed promises, and stored with resources of patience and help and comfort found nowhere else in any other volume, come into use generally *after* a soul has believed in the great salvation, and help to supplement and confirm and make steadfast the work of faith already accomplished in the heart.

Furthermore, it is not necessary, in order that one shall be a loyal Christian, that he shall accept completely all the arguments that have been put forth in behalf of the Bible and the Christian religion. It is conceivable that one may say concerning a given argument advanced in support of this or that doctrine, or in behalf of the whole Bible, "That is a defective and specious plea; I cannot accept that line of argument," and yet devoutly and implicitly accept the fact itself. The arguments may not persuade; but of the doctrine or the Book the inquirer may have no question, so that one may say, perhaps, concerning this or that method of presenting the case, "I accept the truth involved, with all my heart; but not on the ground presented by that putting of the case, or by that argument."

Perhaps we are now ready to tell the towers and count the bulwarks of Zion, or at least to go up on the watchtowers and find out for ourselves that the city of our God—this Scripture city of doctrine, and promise, and poetry, and history, and parable, and biography—is well guarded, that its walls are not yet undermined, that its treasures are still secure,

and that such guarantees of our inheritance as are stored away in the inclosure are still safe.

1. The argument based on the fulfillment of prophecy has long been reckoned one of the proofs that the Bible is an inspired volume. In recent years this argument has been held in the background, or has at least changed its form. It has not, however, lost its force or value. The prophecies concerning the Jewish people, written ages ago, are, for instance, still amazing instances of the foresight and insight of God's prophets of that far-away period. For example: Concerning the financial gifts of the Hebrews there can be no question. They have a gift for trading, for making money, for thrifty accumulation, which puts them in a class by themselves. How does it come that thousands of years ago it was said to them:

Deut. 8. 18
15. 6

"It is [Jehovah] that giveth thee power to get wealth. . . . Thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow"?

When we recall the fact that a few Hebrew bankers in this country and in Europe have for generations financed kingdoms and empires in critical times of war and peace, these few words assume a remarkable import.

Take one other fact—the dispersal of the Jews over the earth. They are found, and have been for ages found, in many lands. In England, in Russia, and elsewhere they have been subjected, generation after generation, to oppression, persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom in almost endless

measure. The story of their sufferings is the great tragedy of history; it is only within the past few years that their condition has become in any manner tolerable, for example, in Russia. Now turn to the Book and see how exactly this very condition was foretold ages ago:

Jehovah shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth. . . . Deut. 28. 64-66, 37
 And among these nations thou shalt find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot . . . and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee. . . . And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away.

These are but a few of the sentences of retribution denounced against the Hebrews in view of their prospective disobedience. The chapter which contains these utterances is full of other sentences of doom, which have been dreadfully and almost literally fulfilled in the history of the people of Israel. Their captivity in Assyria and Babylon, and their return from exile, their rehabilitation in their own country, and the new glory which came to them after their return from captivity—all this was foretold many years in advance of the happening of the events themselves. The question inevitably arises: How did the prophets know all these things in advance, unless, as they themselves declared, Jehovah opened their eyes and gave them the power to see the things which were coming to pass?

Page after page of citation could be here reprinted showing that when Tyre, Babylon, and Nineveh were the great cities of the ancient world, the prophets of Tyre: Ezek. 27. 1-36
 Babylon: Isa. 13.
 Jer. 51. 1-64

Israel and of Judah foretold their overthrow, indicated its completeness, and put into the picture such touches of detail and such minute descriptions of what was in store for these centers of wickedness, pride, and earthly grandeur as make the words of the prophets to-day seem like the transcription of the record of a traveler who has recently visited the waste and desolate places where once these vast capitals stood.

Nineveh: Na-
hum, passim

Further: In spite of the changed methods of interpretation in vogue to-day, what unbiased mind can read the fifty-third of Isaiah, and then read the closing chapters of the Gospels, without concluding that the prophet had in advance a vision of the sufferings and glory of the Messiah?

Are we ready to conclude, in view of these glimpses of what the prophets wrote, ages in advance of the events which came to pass, that the argument from the fulfillment of prophecy is obsolete?

It must be said, however, that the chief thing in the work of the Old Testament prophets was not their predictions. They were witnesses for God to their own times; they brought from Jehovah advice, warnings, instructions, arguments, light, and comfort fitted to the needs of the age in which they lived. It was only occasionally that they predicted in detail the things which were to come.

2. Much was made in other days of the argument from miracles, and in this instance too there has come to be a change of stress. But little is made to-day of the Old Testament miracles as arguments, but the

wonderful works which the Master did, as recorded in the Gospels, were, to use his own term, "signs" of his divine authority, his heavenly benevolence, his superhuman compassion. He appeals to his miracles once in a while as credentials of his Messiahship, as in the case where he sent the disciples of John the Baptist back to their teacher with the direction.

Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Matt. 11. 4, 5

More than once he declared, "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." John 10. 25
5. 36

But the miracles of our Lord were not apparently intended as his chief credentials, as affording the main reason for accepting him as the Saviour. His works of healing, for example, had more than an evidential value; they were signs of his philanthropy; they were symbols of his power to recover the soul from its maladies; they were evidences of his tenderness and gentleness and wisdom as the great Physician. In general his miracles displayed his power over disease, over death, over nature, and over demons—a fourfold sign of his superhuman authority and greatness. Luke 10. 13
Matt. 11. 20-23

The whole discussion as to miracles in the case of Christ narrows down in reason to the single fact of his resurrection from the dead; if that greatest of all marvels, that one culminating proof of his divine character and authority, be accepted, why quibble as to the others? What is there beyond the power

of One who can raise himself from the tomb after he has been put to death by crucifixion?

The question of miracles in the case of our Lord, furthermore, connects itself with his majestic and unique authority and character. Mysterious, inexplicable, and apparently "supernatural" works wrought by an ordinary man would not bring with them to well-balanced minds any assurance of a heavenly embassy. But miracles performed by one who in himself is the Perfect Man, who has no fault or blemish, who stands alone in the perfections of his character among the sons of men, and who declares himself to be supreme in authority over them—miracles of that sort are so interfibered with his life as to be inseparable. When he says to the storm, "Be still"; and to Lazarus, "Come forth," and to the leper, "I will; be thou clean," the words and acts are consonant with his majesty and beauty and dignity and masterfulness as the Man of all men—the Perfect One—and they help us to see his glory. Miracles in this aspect of the case are not inexplicable. They are the easy and natural and proper outfruit of a life and character in which perfection abode.

3. The moral effects of the Christian religion afford the basis for one of the most convincing arguments of our day. Charles L. Brace's book, *Gesta Christi*—devoted to the story of the work incited by the gospel for the poor, the infirm, the fallen, the outcast, the diseased, the crippled, and the forlorn, the work enshrined in hospitals and asylums and reformatories throughout Christendom, the varied work of

modern philanthropy, which is confessedly based on the example and spirit and gospel of our Lord—puts emphasis on this phase of the argument. A contrast drawn between the present heathen world and Christian nations of the earth in this regard puts additional emphasis on it. Dr. Storrs's great work, already alluded to, illumines with research, with comment, with exposition, this great argument, in which he shows that the gospel has alleviated human misery, elevated womanhood, rescued childhood, spread educational institutions and principles, destroyed slavery, fostered civil liberty, ennobled manhood, and enriched the whole of human life. This argument has in recent years—within the past decade, indeed—received additional impetus from events in the Orient. Japan and China, in their quest of the sources of light, of enterprise, of material progress, of educational science and success, have turned toward the Christian nations. They recognize the fact that there has been a vast chasm between their best types of political life and their highest achievements, and what we call Western science and civilization. Who can fail to find just here a new proof of the superiority of Christ and the gospel as over against the other faiths of the world and the civilizations based upon them?

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4. Discoveries in Asia Minor and in the Orient have served in many cases to confirm the historic record of Scripture. Excavations at Nineveh, on the site of ancient Babylon, in Egypt, throughout Palestine and Asia Minor, have for more than fifty years been

(4)

carried on at large cost, and by the aid of the greatest archæologists of the world, who have deciphered old inscriptions, translated the lettering on tablets and monuments which had been buried for three thousand years or more, identified names and dates in countless instances, and almost literally re-created the ancient civilizations. The results of these inquiries and discoveries can scarcely be hinted at here, but it may be said that no discovery has been made that contradicts the narrative of events in the Old Testament at any point where the events coincide in time with the secular record, while on the other hand many facts have been clarified, and many places have been identified as the ones mentioned in the Book.

Perhaps the confirmatory discoveries made with regard to the travels of Saint Paul, as related in the book of Acts, and as referred to in his epistles, may be indicated briefly as among the remarkable things that have been done in this direction. Surveys have been made, for example, of the whole of Asia Minor, so far as the story touches any part of that vast region; the journeys of Paul have been followed up, mile after mile; each place mentioned in the story has been identified; ruins have been uncovered; distances have been measured or reckoned; the narrative of the shipwreck has been tested by the methods and records of the navigator; the Mediterranean Sea has been retraversed, and its depths in many places have been sounded, and, almost foot by foot, the whole record of Paul's journeys has been resus-

citated, in order to determine what basis might be found outside of Acts for the truthfulness of the narrative. Photographs have been taken, topographical sketches and new surveys have been made, maps have been drawn, engraved, and published; and it is now literally true that the record of travel written down concerning Paul as undertaken by him in the first century of the Christian era, from the year A. D. 34 to the year A. D. 68, has been subjected to the most rigid scientific scrutiny, carried on for more than half a century, with the result that the highest authorities in the world—typified, for instance, by Professor W. M. Ramsay, who has devoted years of study to the geography of Asia Minor—declare that the record is true and that no discovery has been made which in any degree mars its validity.

5. There is, however, a more convincing, practicable, and satisfactory method of identifying the Scriptures as a volume with an authoritative and assuring message for the human heart than any we have mentioned. This Book is a self-verifying one; it can be tested, and verified, and approved by the illiterate and the child. We do not need to be masters of literature, students of archæology, acquainted with the arguments based on prophecy and miracles, and “read up” in the story of the reforms wrought out by the gospel in various ages, in order to be convinced that the Book is, substantially and fundamentally, God’s message to the world. There is put within reach of all of us a method whereby we can determine for ourselves whether this message contained in the

Word is worthy of its claims; whether the gospel in its privileges and proffers is divine; whether there is help in the Bible for the crippled nature of man, balm for the conscience and strength for the will.

John 1. 39, 46

Twice in the early part of the fourth Gospel the invitation is spoken to inquirers, "Come and see." Once the word was spoken to two disciples of John the Baptist, who had followed the Master, anxious to know something more about him. He turned and asked what they sought, and when they told him he said, "Come and see." That was Christ's welcome to seeking souls, his word of cheer to those who desired to get better acquainted, his invitation to those who sought his friendship, instruction, and guidance. Next day the same expression was used by Philip, speaking to Nathanael, who had expressed doubt as to the possibility of any good thing coming out of Nazareth. "Come and see," was the reply. That is: "If you have any question with reference to this man whom we have found, and who is, we believe, the Christ, foretold by Moses and announced in the prophets; if you would be satisfied, as we are, that this is the One who was to come, and that he has come—then 'come and see' for yourself. Question him, study him, weigh his words, examine his claims, test his power, and you may find out for yourself, as we have done, that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

The same method is available to-day. "Come and see" is Christ's answer in our time to all inquiring souls; it is the answer of the Church to those who

are bewildered, with distracted hearts and brains, to those who have sought here and there and yonder for light and help and have at last ceased to inquire, having sunken into the apathy of despair. To them all the answer of the Gospels still is: "Come and see for yourselves. Try this Man and his claims. Subject them to the utmost tests; bring yourself to him and find out whether he can heal and help."

For example: The Bible promises light to the perplexed: "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way. . . . If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Let the anxious, distracted, oppressed soul ask for light, in all sincerity, as a child asks to be led in the darkness, reaching out to find the outstretched hand of its mother. Is there any evidence showing that a soul with this disposition of docility and anxiety, sincerely desiring help, was ever left to grope in darkness and uncertainty?

Psa. 25. 9
James 1. 5

The Bible, again, promises pardon and peace to the penitent inquirer: "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh [his transgressions] shall obtain mercy. . . . Ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Scores of such assurances are found in the Book. To an earnest inquirer we may say: "Test one of these promises if you are burdened on account of unforgiven sins. Put these passages to the proof. Bring them to God in prayer, in the name of the Redeemer. Tell your Father in heaven all about your secret doubts, your misgivings, your mental uncertainty, your heartache, your sins. Throw

Prov. 28. 13
Matt. 9. 6

aside for the moment all other questions—about miracles, or the difficulties of the Old Testament, or the number of the sacraments, or the mode of baptism, or the controversies that have raged on sectarian questions. Be careful for one thing alone, that you are willing to give up your sins and to accept the light and help which are promised. No other matter at this juncture is of importance. Ask for pardon, plead the promise; hold fast there. Find out for yourself if this one fact is true, really, fundamentally, gloriously true—that God will pardon the penitent who comes to him in sorrow, with sincere desires for help, and with the deep-seated purpose of living henceforth for him. ‘Come and see’ for yourself whether this great provision of mercy has in it the basis of absolute truthfulness, or whether it is a delusion! You need not take anybody’s say-so; you need not wait to be satisfied by some other man’s testimony. Find out for yourself!”

The gospel offers peace and soul-health in answer to prayer. That does not mean that everything we ask for is to be granted; or that God is going to work miraculous pranks to satisfy our daily whims. It means just what Paul says:

Phil. 4. 6

In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.

We may put that promise to the test, try that sort of a life, make full proof of this and other passages which assure peace to the careworn and heavy-laden.

The Master says, "Obey, and know." We may put his claims to the proof and find out by actual experiment what there is in this assurance which he makes. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." The invitation is so widespread as to include everybody who is in need and who desires deliverance and soul-rest. Throw all other questions and perplexities to the wind except this one matter—the claim of Jesus Christ to give rest and peace to the broken-hearted and burdened. The world is challenged to test that one claim!

For ages this Book has been thus tested. Great scholars, and illiterate pagans; dissipated wretches in the slums of great cities, and men and women of blameless morals but carrying a stubborn heartache in their breasts because of secret sins and because of unfulfilled ideals; monarchs on mighty thrones, and outcasts in the desert at the limit of all earthly resources; women sick with mortal diseases, patients about to undergo surgical operations on which life hung in the balances; men, women, and children in sore bereavement, their hearts breaking with a fresh sense of loss and sorrow—these and hosts of others, burdened and smitten and faint with all sorts of griefs and transgressions and responsibilities, have heard the invitations of God's Word, have halted, hesitated, questioned, and delayed, and at last have come, with all their wants and wounds, and have tried for themselves the promises just quoted, and have found them true. New hope has lighted up their paths; a conscious

peace has been experienced; the burdens have been lifted and lightened; disabled wills have been strengthened; corrupted imaginations have been purified; blinded eyes have been opened; crippled faculties have been healed; the sources and springs of character within have been renewed and reconstructed; and the spirit of testimony has been quickened, so that from many quarters, and from all sorts and conditions of men and women, the word has gone forth: "I have tested this Book for myself; I have put Jesus Christ to the proof; I have found out that his promises are true; that he is a help in trouble, that he is as good as his word, that he gives soul-rest to those who ask for it, and that he affords peace and comfort in time of trial and sorrow. He said to me, 'Come and see.' He invited me, 'Come unto me.' I came, and found rest, and peace, and help."

The offer is open wherever the Bible goes. Test its provisions for yourself. Make the experiment. Put the promises to the proof. Find out for yourself whether or not the Book is a self-verifying one

CHAPTER XV
THE SUPREME TEACHER

How beautiful appear on the mountains
The feet of the joyful messenger; of him that announceth
peace!
Of the joyful messenger of good tidings; of him that an-
nounceth salvation!
Of him that saith unto Sion, thy God reigneth!
All thy watchmen lift up their voice; they shout together;
For face to face shall they see, when Jehovah returneth to
Sion.
Burst forth into joy, shout together, ye ruins of Jerusalem!
For Jehovah hath comforted his people; he hath redeemed
Israel.
Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm, in the sight of all the
nations;
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
—Isa. 52. 7-10. (Bishop Lowth's translation.)

Break thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee,
O living Word!

Bless thou the truth, dear Lord,
To me, to me,
As thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease,
All fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace,
My All-in-All.

—Mary Artemisia Lathbury.

CHAPTER XV

THE SUPREME TEACHER.

ALTHOUGH we have already noted many engaging phases of the Bible, yet we have not yet in detail studied its chief charm—that to which all other attractions are subservient, and for which they exist—the Wonderful Life depicted in the four Gospels. For our own age that Life remains the most convincing credential and the crowning proof of the divine authority and heavenly efficacy of the Book. To array before the student the charms of the Bible without indicating Jesus Christ as the foremost of them all would be blindness indeed.

There are but two aspects in which we have space in this volume to consider the claims of the Master; to one of these attention is now invited—the attractive features which appear in the ministry of our Lord when we consider him as the Great Teacher.

While his utterances, unique in method and style and matchless in the depth and scope of their contents, speak for themselves, yet we are not left without contemporary testimony concerning the impression which his words immediately produced on those who heard him. Nicodemus spoke not only for himself but for others when he said to the Lord, “Thou art a teacher John 3. 2 come from God.” When on a certain occasion his

John 7. 46
Mark 12. 37

foes sent officers to watch and arrest the Master, they were overwhelmed with the wisdom and power of the Lord, and returned to report, "Never man spake like this man." It is on record that "the common people heard him gladly," and often the story tells us that great multitudes followed to hear his word. In view of the testimony thus recorded, and in view of the fact that Jesus has been recognized as the Master Teacher—in most respects without a rival, standing alone in the world—it may be worth while for us to intimate some of the striking features of his work in this regard. In what respects does the Galilean Teacher attract and reward the attention of the nations and of the centuries?

1. The gospel story puts stress on one feature of the case: The Master was an itinerant teacher, and his utterances were largely spoken in circumstances which were informal and unconventional. The immediate occasion suggested his theme; the surrounding landscape, perhaps, or the emergent circumstances, or an inquiry from one of his disciples, or an objection from the multitude, or some other passing incident, afforded opportunity for the delivery or for the illustration of a message. And yet these occasional words, spoken by Him at the seaside, along country roads, by the well-curb, in the sickroom, walking through the wheatfields, seated on a commanding hilltop, in the synagogue, in the temple in Jerusalem, in some village the name of which is forgotten, in the quiet of the home, at the dinner table, in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, and in many other similar situa-

tions—these words thus spoken, while meeting completely the immediate needs of the hour, have possessed the secret of immortal influence. They have instructed the centuries, inspired countless millions with a desire for higher things, and laid the foundation on which the ages have builded the institutions of Christendom.

This phase of the case is without precedent or imitation. Other teachers have had their lecture rooms, their “porches,” and other resorts, as in Athens, and they have drawn their pupils from a wide range of country; but this Teacher used all out-of-doors as his place of instruction. Instead of waiting for people to come to him, he hunted them up; he followed after them, sought them out, studied their daily habits, mingled with them in the by-places, taught in their streets, stood in the market place, and in all possible ways got acquainted with folks. What an example he sets in this regard to those who would become “fishers of men”!

2. The quiet, conversational method of the Master is also at once in evidence as we study the Gospels. He never seems to have entered the realm of heated, feverish, agitated discussion; rarely spoke as an impassioned orator; and except in the temple, and occasionally in the synagogue, revealed no formality or ceremony, apart from that which was his by reason of his personal dignity, the authority with which he spoke as the Teacher and the Master of men.

3. There were paradoxical phases to his instructions. He was now tender and gracious and compassionate,

and anon severe and denunciatory; he threatened and exposed the scribes and Pharisees, and yet spoke with such winning tenderness that little children came and nestled in his arms. He could mingle in his utterance a simplicity which attracted the common people, and which remains yet one of the charms of the gospel, and yet along with it a profoundness and a subtlety and a depth not yet fathomed by any human mind. In the prodigal son, for instance, these two qualities are united. Here is a story which a child can apprehend; it fixes itself in the memory with one reading; it is so picturesque that each phase of the parable is seen with startling distinctness, with the imagination all alive, as if it were a drama being enacted before the eye. And yet who has let his plummet line down into the depths of that story? What commentator, after long study, endowed with highest insight and scholarship and ability, has ever been able to say, "I know this production now; I have sounded all its depths, and explored its utmost meaning, and construed all its wisdom, and mastered its fullness of instruction"?

4. Closely allied with this suggestion is another: the teachings of the Master are unsystematic. He took no theme for complete development on any one occasion. The one elaborate discourse which we have on record, the so-called Sermon on the Mount, covers more than one topic, although it is coherent, and may be unified under a single heading, perhaps. But if we compare his method of instruction with what we find in books of theology, in catechisms, in

works on moral science, in creeds, we see at once an amazing difference. To the Master's mind the needs of the immediate individual soul, or the people then present, were the chief thing. He had an eye for the claims of the soul, rather than for the claims of the sermon, and dealt with men directly, according to the exigencies of the moment.

5. Another fact is to be noted: his teachings were all spoken utterances. He wrote nothing, and appears to have had but little care, at least took no apparent pains, to have his words written down. He promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would remind them, later, of what he had said, but at the time he was seemingly as prodigal of speech, as careless of the future of his words, as nature is in regard to the seeds that are scattered on the wind. Millions of seeds and seed spores are thrown out from tree and bush and vine, to be wafted far and wide, to fall here, there, or yonder, in the water, or in the garden, among the rocks, in the hills, apparently wasted. So, in seeming, the Master, writing down not a single word, systematizing no doctrines into shape for his disciples, formulating no book, scattered his words on the wind, and left them to take root where they would. His confidence in the efficacy and immortality of the truth in this regard was wonderful. He believed that the Father would give the increase, that he would care for the precious word thus spoken almost at random from day to day.

Suppose to-day that a man should arise with something like the insight, the wisdom, the questioning

faculty, the picturesqueness of speech, the conversational aptitudes, the moral power, the compassion, the mingled severity and tenderness which our Lord displayed in his addresses and in his teachings, sometimes for an individual soul. How careful would the world be to report his sayings, to follow him up, to save every syllable from oblivion, to write down by stenographic help each address delivered, and each word of such an instructor dropped on the street, or at table, or in the quiet of the home! In the case of the Master his disciples recalled many of his words, and the people must have had in remembrance many others. But it is evident that we have only a small part of what he actually did say in his public ministrations. Many discourses were spoken and forgotten; many parables, besides those in the Gospels, were uttered, and lost. How rich we should be if by any process of resuscitation the lost words of Jesus could be reproduced! And how majestic are his claims, when we reflect on the occasional phases of his teaching—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. . . . This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations."

Matt. 24. 35
24. 14

6. The absolutely self-confident certainty of tone in our Lord's teachings commands attention. He spoke as one who knew all things. In one single respect he avows himself ignorant—concerning the time of his coming again; but in no other regard did he ever exhibit anything like hesitation. This is all the more remarkable when we consider the scope

of his teachings. He had to deal with the fundamental problems, the questions which have baffled the greatest minds, the character of God, his relations with men, the nature of prayer, the duty of man to his brother, the Sabbath day, the slavery of sin, the guilt of man, the future of the soul, the problem of immortality, retribution, here and hereafter, the connection of this life with that which may follow, the cultivation of character, the right ideal of manhood, the awfulness of death, and other such like themes of human inquiry. Ask the wisest man on earth with regard to many of these questions, and he will halt and question, baffled and in dismay. Yet Jesus Christ, offhand, without hesitation, never stopping to say, what every other teacher has had to say a thousand times, "I do not know," dealt with these great critical, vital, complex questions, day by day, in public and in private, on the street and in the synagogue, without making a mistake, without ever uttering an inadvertent word, without for one moment showing a sign of uncertainty! And to-day if we need knowledge on any of these topics, if we want to find out the very last word that can be said in respect to many of these issues, whither can we go but to Jesus Christ? His words are our last and our only resource in hours of inquiry, doubt, and perplexity. This man, whose nature we cannot probe, the workings of whose consciousness no man can unfold, spoke as one who had command of infinite resources, who owned time and eternity, who had insight into the nature of both God and man, who

could not be baffled or halted in his command of the truth, who knew all things that need to be known concerning the duty and destiny of the human race and the relationship of that race to sin, death, God, heaven and hell. If in this respect there is any parallel to the Great Teacher, we know not where to look for him.

The difference between Socrates, for example, and Jesus Christ in respect of this phase of teaching is remarkable. The Greek sage did not claim to know; he confessed that he was ignorant of many things, and his aim in his socratic methods of inquiry and probing was to show other people how ignorant they also were, to rebuke half-knowledge, to expose empty pretenders, and to bring people to the place where in humble candor they would recognize their ignorance. Jesus Christ, however, in his manner and attitude assumed to be master of all wisdom; he spoke as if he knew all things. Who ever assumed that attitude before without being exposed as a charlatan? Let any man to-day issue the challenge of assumed omniscience, and how soon he will be put to scorn!

7. The policy of caution and reticence which Jesus pursued in his teaching illustrates his wisdom. Seldom did he make any direct claim that he was the Messiah. Only to the woman of Sychar, to Peter at Cæsarea Philippi after that apostle's great confession, to the healed blind man in the temple, and to the Sanhedrin, in an hour when the assertion cost him his life, he said, "I am the Son of God," meaning by that to claim a superhuman, unique, and divine

relationship to the Father. He did the works which the Redeemer was expected to do; he spoke words which only he could speak, he exhibited a character so symmetrical, so perfect, so complete that from day to day the question was asked, Whence hath this man this wisdom? Who is this Son of man? What manner of man is this? Then, up to the time of his death on the cross, he allowed men to make up their minds for themselves how to answer the question, Who is the Son of man?

As to his atonement, he was also reticent, and wisely so. Those who find fault with that doctrine as coming from Paul and not from Christ, and who quibble about it to the effect that the Master did not teach it, forget that it was not possible for him to wisely or properly declare in its completeness a doctrine which was not yet wrought out. Until the work was done, how could it be fully proclaimed? He intimated again and again that he had to die, that he had come to give his life a ransom for many, but he could not in reason go farther than this tentative and preliminary step until he had actually suffered, the just for the unjust, for the sins of the world. Then he could wisely tell his disciples:

Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Luke 24. 46, 47

8. The interrogative methods of Christ have already been noted (see Chapter V). His use of questions is without a parallel. He knew how to put a probe

8.

down deep into the heart, how to induce a spirit of shame and remorse, how to awaken inquiry, how to prompt and encourage the quest of truth, all by a question.

9. The picturesque methods of Christ were unique. His employment of parables and various sorts of illustrations make his gospel teachings affluent and beautiful beyond precedent. To mingle rhetorical beauty with the deepest moral truth, to make an utterance at once extraordinary for its verbal grace and splendor, and at the same time immortal for its penetrating power and spiritual life, was what he did every day. He might have put his truths into prosaic, plain-spoken form: would they have been recalled, and remembered? But he makes the birds, and the lilies, and the grass, and the clouds, and the red and lowering sky, and the sower, and the children playing in the streets, and the woman mixing a batch of dough or sweeping the house, and the mustard tree, and the net, and the fisherman, and the pearl, and the hid treasure, and the tares and the wheat, and scores of other familiar facts the instruments for illumining his truth. He binds his messages to these, and whithersoever they fly his precious words go along. Truth which catches the eye, startles the fancy, transfixes attention, captivates the imagination, fixes itself in the memory, germinates with singular fecundity, enriches the soil, and brings forth abundant fruit—that is the truth which Jesus Christ spoke from time to time in his parables and other figurative methods of speech. One knows not

which to wonder at the most—their radiant and unfading beauty, or their matchless moral force and searching power.

10. The familiarity of Jesus Christ with the Old Testament Scriptures and his extraordinary use of them in teaching form another feature in his work. It would require a volume to do justice to the theme. He seems to have the whole Old Testament at immediate command, not as though he had merely committed it to memory, but as though its facts, and characters, and truths were written in spirit and substance in his deepest heart. When he touches any Old Testament passage he makes it blaze with new light; and in addition he shows implicit confidence in its truthfulness, deals with it as though he accepted it, and thus commends it to us. One great argument for that part of the Bible is founded on the way in which our Lord dealt with it, and used it, and handed it over to his disciples, underwritten by himself.

11. A final element in his work as a teacher to be mentioned is his straightforward aim, at the heart, conscience, judgment, soul. He spoke not to entertain, to play with a great theme as with a toy, not self-consciously, not dramatically or oratorically—but as a man, speaking from on high, charged with supreme responsibility, and aiming to guide, awaken, warn, comfort, save.

Were there no other revelation in the New Testament beyond that of the matchless qualities and peerless methods of the Great Teacher, it would still be one of the most attractive books in the world!

CHAPTER XVI
THE GREAT PORTRAIT

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell.

—Col. 1. 15–19.

Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against themselves, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.

—Heb. 12. 2, 3.

Laden with guilt, and full of fears,
I fly to thee, my Lord,
And not a glimpse of hope appears,
But in thy written Word.

This volume of my Father's grace
Does all my grief assuage;
Here I behold my Saviour's face
Almost on every page.

This is the field where hidden lies
The pearl of price unknown;
That merchant is divinely wise
Who makes the pearl his own.

—Isaac Watts.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GREAT PORTRAIT

It has already been indicated in the foregoing pages that the supreme charm of the Book is the portraiture of the Perfect Life given in the Gospels. Here we have the man Christ Jesus set forth in the scenes of his earthly ministry, a servant and yet a King; a peasant and a toiler and yet our Master and Lord; fairer than the children of men and altogether lovely. This fourfold portrait which is afforded by the evangelists is the coronal attraction and credential of the Book, and it stands by itself in literature as an unparalleled representation of complete and blameless Manhood, the only embodiment of a Perfect Character to be found in the world. In our journey through the mountain ranges of Scripture we have glimpsed some noble peaks; this one, on which is pinnacled in unapproachable majesty the shining figure of the Perfect Man, outtops, outshines them all.

And this gospel portrait is not only of surpassing beauty, but it involves the argument which for this age at least has proved the most convincing and immovable with regard to the validity and authority of the gospel which Jesus Christ proclaimed, and which we have in fourfold form in the New Testament. Given, this Perfect Man, recognized as the supreme teacher of morals and religion; and his claims, spoken

by his own lips, declaring with all solemnity and clearness what manner of man he conceived himself to be, and for what purpose he had come: in face of that problem, of that combination of facts, we leave behind us all questions of prophecies, of miracles, of apostolic testimony, of early creeds, of churchly authority, and in his presence and in view of his wisdom, equipoise, manhood, and majesty, submit the case for decision at the bar of the world's best reason. If this Perfect Man, this Supreme Teacher, claims for himself in language which cannot be misconstrued, again and again, an authority, a relationship both to the Father in heaven and to men on earth, a power and a personality which are, to say the least, superhuman, which pedestal him on the throne of universal empire, which require from the human race homage, obedience, love, and implicit loyalty, what rational solution of the problem is possible except that one which acknowledges the truth of his claims, the sanity of his assumptions, and the rightfulness of his sway as Lord of lords and King of kings?

THE QUADRUPLEX GOSPEL

The advantages furnished by the fourfold picture of the Master are evident upon inquiry. The first Gospel lays emphasis on the prophetic traits in the portrait, citing passage after passage from the Old Testament in the phraseology, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah," or some other bard of the ancient time. Here we also have

the discourses of our Lord massed together, and a cluster of parables spoken in or near Capernaum, together with material used by the Master in Jerusalem during the last week of his stay on earth. This Gospel has been aptly styled the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The second Gospel, by Mark, is the shortest, most direct and compact, and sometimes the most graphic of the four. The term "immediately"—or, as it is rendered in the Revised Version, "straightway," used eleven times in the opening chapter—betokens the character of this narrative, which pursues a straight course, with no deviations or diversions, summing up the temptation, for example, into two verses and leaving out all references to the birth, and childhood, and life at Nazareth. Christ the mighty One, the Master of all forces, and the Lord of men and angels, is herein portrayed.

The third Gospel, clearly written by Saint Luke, is the longest, the most systematic, and the most complete of the four, putting stress upon the deeds and utterances which indicate Christ's sympathy with the Gentile world, and with the sorrows of common folk. A large amount of material—the first two chapters, with chapters ten to seventeen complete, and other portions—belong to this Gospel alone. It is the Gospel which tells us most aptly of the Son of man.

The fourth Gospel, over which the centuries have been quibbling, is such an original, profound, extraordinary work that one may conclude, offhand, that

it must have come from one who knew, intimately and cordially, the Lord Jesus. It gives a representation of his inner life, the divine side of his character and ministry, uses terms—such as Word, Life, Light, Good Shepherd—nowhere else found in the Bible, except in certain other productions assigned by tradition to Saint John, and is filled from beginning to end with material peculiar to this Gospel.

Thus we have a view of Christ given from four standpoints, a study of his life and work written by four men, each possessing his own endowments, his own angle of vision, and his own gifts for such a work. A life so rich, so many-sided, so fruitful, so heavenly as was the life of Jesus Christ, could not have been fully pictured by any one evangelist.

We have in our time advantages for the study and apprehension of the surroundings of our Lord's earthly career such as no former generation possessed. Up to the beginning of the last century there was not a life of Christ in existence except one, of mediæval and mystical tone; all the "Lives" now before the public—and there are some of extraordinary value—have been written within the past seventy-five years, the leading ones within the past thirty or forty years. His human career has been studied and portrayed from different standpoints by some of the great scholars of the world, in Germany, in England, and in this country. The local coloring in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Nazareth; the landscape, the scenery, the work of the synagogue, family life in that age, social customs of the time, have all been reproduced

with singular vividness. No other career was ever studied with the minute, painstaking research which has flooded the age and land in which Jesus of Nazareth lived. Men have spent months in Palestine for the one purpose of studying the topography and localities in the midst of which the earthly life of our Lord was passed, so that they might vivify the narrative of his career which they had planned to write. All possible sources of human knowledge have been explored in order to reproduce that career in print. Thousands of photographs have been made whereby to place before the eye the sites of places connected with the scenes of his ministry, and notable artists, such as Tissot and Hofmann, have devoted their lives to the task of setting forth upon canvas the incidents of that Perfect Life, from the annunciation to the Virgin Mary, through all its diversified course down to the hour when he ascended from Mount Olivet. It follows that we have at command means for seeing, apprehending, and appreciating the humanity of our Lord such as were never before possessed by mankind until our own day. The portrait of the Perfect Man is set before this age with a clearness, a beauty, and a majesty never before achieved. This exhibition of his unique personality is one of his most precious bequests to the world, and, like the sun in the midst of the solar system, this picture of the Man irradiates Christendom.

This matchless portrait, first found in the Gospels, and in the impression which the Master made upon his own generation, and then gradually developed

from age to age by the work of successive generations until in its fullness and glory it shines before us to-day, is one of the chief agencies by which a leading aim of the gospel is being accomplished—namely, the introduction upon earth of a new character.

Who knew what possibilities are lodged in a human soul—what capacities for growth, for courage, for patience, for compassion, are stored up in manhood—until Jesus Christ came to embody them in his own blameless and perfect life? The type of character which he exemplified had been beyond the utmost flight of the poet's dream, and the prophet's vision, until it was shown forth by the carpenter's son in Nazareth and the Son of man in his ministry.

That term, "the Son of man," Jesus assumed as his chief title. When he spoke of himself it was always on his lips. Whether he spoke of himself as one who had no place to lay his head, or as one who was to give his life a ransom for many; whether he foresaw and foretold his humiliation or his exaltation, his sufferings or his final reign, his almost invariable title, as used by himself, was this term, "the Son of man." The title is full of meaning. It will stand the test of long and careful study. The Master in his employment of this title indicates in the word "man"—which in the Greek is not the term signifying an individual, but the generic word, corresponding to our term "man," as meaning the race, mankind, humanity—the idea that he is the Son of the human race, the efflorescent embodiment of all that is noble and glorious in humanity, the ideal man. In this

Matt. 8. 20
 20. 28
 Mark 8. 31
 Matt. 25. 31

term also is involved of course the notion of his actual manhood; Jesus was no phantasmal, spectral, half-human figure, but a man, "born of a woman, Gal. 4. 4
born under the law," subject to the limitations and burdens of ordinary life, and bearing the sorrows and toils of a common humanity.

The name likewise suggests the brotherliness of his nature, the compassion which marked his acts and which throbbed in his breast, the sympathy with low-down folk and little children which was so often shown in his attitude and words and miracles.

There was, moreover, a divine element even in this title which more than any other allied him with our race, for he used this term, "the Son of man," Matt. 25. 31
when he made his loftiest claims, as, for example, when he told his disciples that the hour would come when he would sit upon the throne of his glory to judge all the nations. With this title on his lips he arrogates to himself supreme authority.

The manifold characteristics of this Son of man are so harmoniously wrought into perfect unity; his life is so symmetrical, so balanced in moral equipoise, so luminous throughout, as to make it difficult of analysis or description. In that life were blended components never until the time of the Incarnation brought into human embodiment before. The world was not lacking in representations of a single great virtue. Men were found in every land who stood out from their fellows by means of some one conspicuous grace, some single endowment which lifted them above the ordinary ranks of humanity. In him all

these graces and virtues are blended and harmonized so as to make a pattern man, a perfect human life, unexampled elsewhere. Some of the virtues which he embodied had hardly ever been seen or understood until he taught and lived them—such as humility, meekness, forgiving love, and compassion. Glimpses of these graces had been seen now and then in Israel, and even among other nations; but they had never been seen combined with the other qualities which he possessed. In him alone among all the children of men we see military leadership, world-wide enterprise, supreme wisdom, teaching tact, sympathy with childhood and womanhood, courage of the highest type, fortitude of an exemplary order—the consideration of which has supported timid women in view of the tortures of martyrdom—a majesty before which kings have bowed in humble homage and adoration, a dignity which is superhuman, along with a kindly, considerate, human touch and temper which ally him with the lowest mortal on the earth, and with the humblest child; an authority which arrogates to itself command over the forces and inhabitants of both time and eternity, and a friendliness which binds him to publicans and sinners—all these strangely blended into one perfect life, into the peerless portrait of the man Christ Jesus!

This new character, found in its first representations in the gospel, and in due time developed in human life, and in the unfoldings of grace through the ages, has now become familiar to men wherever the Bible has gone. It is the crowning beauty of

that Book, and its invincible credential. Increasing in vividness and beauty, becoming more distinct and glorious in the lapse of time, it is one of the chief agencies whereby the race to which we belong is being renewed, as it attracts the eye, melts the heart, wins the homage, and molds the lives of men in every race and clime.

The chief facts in the earthly career of this Perfect Man are without question to-day, except that the miracles remain in dispute in certain controversial realms. We can afford in this discussion to leave them on one side; in the presence of this greatest of all miracles, the unique life of this Man, it seems idle to ask whether or not he could heal the leper by a word, calm the sea by a command, and raise the dead from the tomb. The fact of his own resurrection, which cannot be ignored or denied without believing in theories which are preposterously absurd—theories which have been invented to account for the belief of the disciples and of the early Church in this great fundamental fact, without accepting it as a fact—surpasses all other miracles attributed to him. In addition to that, his unique character—which, to recall the words of Bushnell, who helped to put the argument in shape for his generation and ours, “forbids his classification with man”—combined with the claims which he makes and the rank which he assumes in the universe, constitute credentials of a higher order than the signs and wonders which he wrought during his ministry. Putting aside for the moment all other arguments, we may build our

claim for the supreme authority of Jesus Christ on two immovable buttresses—what he was and what he declared himself to be.

Here are credentials which appeal to all men everywhere. Consider them in brief: Jesus Christ lived but thirty-three years; he was a Jew, yet he had none of the narrowness and provincialism of his race. He dwelt in a little district secluded from the centers of intellectual and political activity; he enjoyed none of the advantages of travel and scholastic culture, and alliance with the notable forces which usually shape opinion and lay the foundations of a new civilization; he had no treasury, no army, no navy, no throne, no scepter, no large following; the rulers of his own people conspired to put him out of the way, and the Roman empire, in the person of its representative in Judea, Pontius Pilate, the governor, consented to his execution. Yet his words, plans, and work have reached to the ends of the earth. His are the only words which have in them the secret of universal brotherhood and empire and the promise of imperishable influence. Unless, indeed, this Man of Galilee was what he claimed to be, and what the Church in all ages has believed him to be, then his wonderful life stands in the midst of human history an insoluble riddle and a paradox for evermore!

The perfect moral character which we have been briefly considering has won admiration and recognition even from those who have refused to recognize his divinity. Lecky, the rationalistic historian, declares that "in the character and example of Christ is an

enduring principle of regeneration." W. R. Greg, the English skeptical critic, has pronounced Jesus to be "the highest ideal yet presented to us on the earth." John Stuart Mill, philosopher, critic, scholar, says, in spite of his doubts, "Everything which is excellent in ethics may be brought within the sayings of Christ without doing violence to the language. He is the preëminent genius, the greatest reformer and martyr, the ideal representative and guide of humanity." And, not to multiply instances and witnesses, Renan declares that "the person of Jesus is at the highest summit of human greatness."

But who can in reason stop with such tributes as these? If Jesus Christ was confessedly the greatest reformer, teacher, and example the world ever saw, then his testimony concerning himself must be taken into consideration. Surely he knew who and what he was. What did he have to say with regard to his rank, as graded with other members of the human race? What was his place in the universe, according to his own judgment?

What did this unique, incomparable, perfect One say in his own behalf? What claims does he make for himself? What does he demand from the world? What authority does he assume to exercise over the world, over angels and men, over nature, and even over the administration of the heavenly empire?

Our reply to these inquiries must be brief. In a single word, his claims, his assumptions of super-human authority and rank, his demands upon men of all ranks and conditions—these are transcendent.

John 13. 13 He makes himself the object of supreme regard, and puts himself in kingly relations with mankind such as befit Ruler and subjects. He said: "Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye do well; for so I am." He assumed the right to invite men, and to command them with absolute authority:

Matt. 11. 28 Follow me. . . . Come unto me. . . . I am the light of
 19. 21 the world. . . . I am the bread of life. . . . I am the way,
 John 8. 12 and the truth, and the life.
 6. 35
 14. 6

These words, put into the mouth of Moses, or Isaiah, or Paul, or Plato, or Confucius, would be the emptiest of mockeries. The world would laugh any man to scorn, no matter how great his abilities, how high his rank, how masterful his influence, were he to arrogate to himself the right to use as his own the words of command and invitation which our Lord constantly employs. Men of all ranks and nations, from age to age, and belonging to many lands, have acknowledged these claims. Rulers of great empires have bowed in submission at his feet, uncrowning themselves before him. Conquerors of nations and commanders of armies have laid at his throne their spoils and swords. The loftiest minds that have been developed through the centuries have knelt before him and with deepest humility and loyalty have confessed him to be King of kings and Lord of lords. As indisputable sovereign over the world of moral and religious thought and life his sway has been more and more widely recognized, year by year. In view of these facts who can say in reason and candor, "The Man of Nazareth was and is only a man"?

His fourfold claim—that he has the authority to forgive sin, and the power to impart rest to all who labor and are heavy-laden; that he is to exercise supreme jurisdiction over all nations at the final judgment, and that he is able to bestow the Divine Spirit on his disciples in answer to prayer—lifts him into an altitude far above all merely human prerogatives and realms. It is not possible to question, critically, and with any substratum of fact underneath the inquiry, whether Jesus did or did not make these claims. His words remain, after the lapse of ages, unquestioned by competent authority in this regard. And upon them countless myriads have built, and other countless myriads are now building, their hopes and plans for time and eternity. One might easily travel round the world and find in nearly every land witnesses to testify that they had found these words of Christ, his assurances of help, his promises of peace, his offer of mercy, to be a guide in darkness, a solace in sorrow, a help for the work of life and the basis of hope for the life beyond. In the service of Christ, communing with his Word, trusting in his grace, and imitating his example, they have discovered the secret not only of a happy but of a useful and a consecrated life. Their heartfelt assurance that he is able to succor them in time of need, that he is with them by his spiritual presence and assistance, that he is the inspiration and prompting of all that is noblest and highest in their inner life and in their outer achievements, grows in clearness and certainty, year by year. These jubilant witnesses

Matt. 9. 6

11. 28

25. 31-46

John 15. 26

would gladly join with angels on high and disciples of the Master on earth in the song of Saint Bernard, written in another tongue, ages ago:

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
 Nor can the memory find,
 A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
 O Saviour of mankind!

Face to face with this perfect portrait of the Christ of the Gospels, and in full view of the claims which he made for himself, again and again when on earth, and with the world-wide testimony of his followers sounding on every side, we may fitly, and with unfeigned humility, bring this portraiture of the Master to an end by calling to mind and gratefully employing the ancient collect:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst send from the Father the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth; Grant that he may enlighten our minds with the teaching of thy truth, and sanctify our hearts with the power of thy grace, so that evermore abiding in thee we may be found steadfast in faith and holy in life, being conformed unto thine image, who art with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever one God, world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII
THE BOOK OF HOPE

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

Thou art my Son,

This day have I begotten thee?

and again,

I will be to him a Father,

And he shall be to me a Son?

And again when he bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith,

Who maketh his angels winds,

And his ministers a flame of fire:

but of the Son he saith,

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;

And the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

—Heb. 1. 1-8.

Great God, mine eyes with pleasure look
On the dear volume of thy Book;
There my Redeemer's face I see,
And read his Name who died for me.

—Isaac Watts.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BOOK OF HOPE

THE Bible throughout is distinguished by an element which serves to divide off the Christian system from all other faiths—the spirit of hope. Other religions of the world are brooded over with gloom, with fear, with monstrous and grotesque superstitions; not one of the pagan faiths is lighted up with joyful anticipations of better things to come. A vision of these better things is caught in advance by every Christian believer, and he is thus heartened for whatever of conflict or suffering he must undergo. Of him and his fellow soldiers the poet has sung:

They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh.

To this feature of the Book we now give heed as we bring our discussion to an end—to this great truth that the teachings of this volume beget a wholesome spirit of optimism, buoy up the depressed with encouragement, direct the eye of the soul ever upward and onward, and continually point out in the opening future greater achievements to be accomplished, nobler victories to be won, deeper joys to be experienced, and vaster empires to be conquered.

Great souls have written again and again of the value and force of this principle which is by precept

and example amply set forth in Scripture. Tennyson's line,

The mighty hopes which make us men;

the words of another poet,

The most vital movement mortals feel
Is hope, the balm and life-blood of the soul;

the utterance of Pope,

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;

and Cowper's glowing testimony,

Hope, as an anchor, firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian's vessel, and defies the blast,

—these are all in accord with the profound truth spoken by a great London preacher, Canon Liddon:

Hope is the soul of moral vitality, the nerve, the backbone, of all true life. Any man, or society of men, who would live—in the moral sense of the term life—must be looking forward to something.

Saint Paul had in mind a truth like this when he announced as his motto,

Phil. 3. 13

This one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal.

1. A single glance at the degradation of the old Roman world in the age when our Lord was born will satisfy any inquirer that one of the most precious gifts which the gospel brought to men was this uplifting, inspiring grace, Christian hope. No one can study the classical literature of that period without being moved with the despairing tone of its writers, great and small. The times were corrupt, the age

was rotten with vices which cannot even be described in our day; things, indeed, were so utterly bad that men had ceased to expect any improvement. It would require more space than we can give simply to catalogue the miseries, crimes, and degradations of the epoch, or to cite from Roman essayists, poets, and historians characteristic passages depicting the greed, cruelty, and debauchery which had destroyed the moral life of the people. The one fact to which we advert is that men were in despair; they could see no prospect of betterment; philosophy, the pagan faiths, law, poetry, military power, heathen systems of ethics, literature, the arts—all had done their utmost, and the world was sated, selfish, despairing, lost! Saint Paul, writing to a body of converted Gentiles and referring to their estate before the gospel came to them, says: "At that time ye were without Christ, . . . having no hope, and without God in the world." It was therefore to a race merged in the depths of helplessness and despondency that the gospel came with its message of light and encouragement. One of its tuneful preludes ran thus:

Eph. 2. 12

The Dayspring from on high shall visit us, to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1. 78, 79

And another, sent by an apostle to a body of converts who lived in the place which of all others needed to be led up out of the depths of degradation and despair, the city of Rome, is this:

Whatsoever things were written beforetime were written for our learning, that through patience, and through comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope.

Rom. 15. 4

Patience, comfort, hope—to make these blessings accessible the Bible was prepared, and its message in that era was proclaimed to a generation whose moral collapse defies delineation. Matthew Arnold has striven to portray that age in this stanza:

On that hard pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

But not even the poet's "vision and faculty divine" can reproduce the horrors of that period, one of whose most deplorable features was its prevalent despair. The oracles were dumb, the priests were impotent, the deities were dead, and apathy and hopelessness had settled down like night on the empire. It was in such an age that the religion of hope began its course in the world, and the "Book of the Future," completed by the addition of its New Testament portion, unfolded its visions of cheer and comfort for mankind.¹

2. Even apart from the biblical teachings and examples on this theme, and without reference to the religious offices of this virtue which we have in mind—the benediction which accompanies a cheery temperament, the helpfulness which marks the man who always looks on the silver lining of the cloud, and who thus illumines other lives by the sunshine of his buoyant spirit—these speak for themselves, without argument or comment. It is a noble function which is

¹ For a survey of the moral condition of the pagan world at the opening of the Christian era, with references to the original authorities in the case, see F. W. Farrar's *The Early Days of Christianity*, opening chapter.

given to those who have a sanguine disposition, wherewith they can hearten the despondent, encourage the timid, comfort the forlorn, strengthen the faint-hearted, and succor those who are mired in the Slough of Despond. Even the chronic lamentations of the pessimist cease for a time in the presence of one whose eyes are keen enough to look up through the tempest-clouds and see the bow of promise shining in the heavens. The ability to make the invalid laugh, to wipe the tears from the eyes that weep, to bring a new purpose and a new cheeriness to those who are utterly broken in spirit, is a noble faculty. But when to that natural gift of a cheery disposition there are added the illumination, the steadiness, the hold on things eternal which the hope of the gospel assures—then indeed do we begin to understand the worth of this endowment.

3. It is evident to those who study the history of the ancient Israelites that Jehovah kept them together, consolidated the tribes into unity, preserved them from utter destruction, and gave them much of their distinction and usefulness in the world largely by means of the impartation of hope to them, as individuals and as a people. The hope of an heir, planted in the heart of Abraham; the hope of deliverance from Egyptian bondage, kept alive amid experiences of tyranny and poverty indescribable; the hope of an inheritance in Canaan, of conquest over their foes, of a return into their own land out of dreadful captivity, of a King who would by and by reign from the river unto the end of the earth—these hopes, from

time to time, maintained by God's grace, and administered by the sure word of prophecy, were chief among the means by which the chosen nation was preserved as God's messenger and mouthpiece to the world.

4. The prophets of the nation, in spite of the denunciations which they were often bidden to speak, and the messages of doom which became their "burden" as they went on their errands of wrath, were still men of hopeful temper. Every man in that ancient "goodly fellowship of the prophets" was an optimist. Not a man of them all, except Jonah, contented himself with lamentations, censure, and predictions of doom. When Israel and Judah both went into captivity, when the city of Jerusalem was laid waste, and the altar was desolate, and the temple was in ruins, and the people, broken-hearted and despairing, cried out in anguish to ask how they could sing the Lord's songs in a strange land—even then the voice of the prophet was not silent. He had a song for them in the night of their exile. To the captives by the waters of Babylon one of their prophets spoke:

Ezek. 11. 17,
19, 20

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will gather you out from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. . . . And I will put a new spirit within you: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Thus at various times in the history of this people they sang: "We shall be brought out of Egypt with

a high hand and a strong arm! . . . Our children shall inherit Canaan! . . . We shall escape from exile and come back to the Promised Land! By and by our King shall be born! We shall have a Redeemer! He shall reign for ever and ever! In him shall all the earth be blessed! Hallelujah!"

5. The modern transformation in the mind and heart of China wrought out by the impartation of something like this ancient national spirit of hope is one of the most remarkable features of our time. For centuries that empire has been in a comatose state; its eyes have been averted from the present to the past; its educational system, its domestic life, its political rule all have been fashioned by its habit of dozing and dreaming over the work of its long-dead ancestors and in servile fashion imitating and copying out in writing or in the memory the wisdom of antiquity. In that moribund estate there could be no outlook for that great people in an age like ours. Within a decade fresh life has been awakened in China through a new spirit of mingled desire, expectation, and ambition, whereby the eyes of the leaders are directed to the future. And now the government which had long been but little else than a moss-grown political petrification, is informed with modern methods, is instinct with new life, and is throbbing through and through with a new hope. And it is no secret that the awakening of this new hope in China, and the startling change that has been achieved in its entire system of education, government, and life, have come in large measure through the quiet,

leavening influence of the gospel which has been at work for a hundred years, amid persecution and peril, throughout the land.

6. The message of the Scripture, throughout, is full of exhortations bidding men cultivate this expectation and desire for better things to come. The New Testament has been aptly called "the most hopeful book in all the literature of the world. Its gospel begins with the heavenly song of peace and good will, and it ends with the new song of the redeemed in the skies."

Note these passages as types of many like utterances taken from the Scripture:

- Psa. 31. 24 ' Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart,
all ye that hope in the Lord.
71. 5 Thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from
my youth.
130. 7 Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is
mercy.
- Prov. 14. 32 The righteous hath hope in his death.
- Lam. 3. 26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait
for the salvation of the Lord.
- Zech. 9. 12 Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.
- Rom. 8. 24 We are saved by hope.
15. 13 The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing
that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy
Ghost.
- 1 Cor. 13. 13 Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three.
- 1 Thess. 5. 8 For an helmet, the hope of salvation.
- Heb. 6. 18, 19 The hope set before us; which we have as an anchor of the
soul.

Nourished, informed, stimulated, and built up by this grace of hope, the Christian is girded for victory, and sustained and strengthened for toil and suffering.

7. Is it not worth while to give a thought to the

work wrought in the world by the pioneers of exploration, discovery, and colonization, who have been sustained by hope amid perils in the wilderness, the jungle, and the mountain in their arduous labors of opening up the world for commerce and Christianity? Without the reinforcement which hope gave them in dark hours, how could they have made any headway? These heroic men have made the forests ring with their cheers and the ocean to resound with their songs. The man who first crossed the Atlantic in search of a new path to India; the navigator who first found his resolute way around the globe; the lion-hearted pioneers who opened up, generations ago, the Northern Lakes, the Mississippi River, the great plains, and the far off Rocky Mountains, and thus put a lien upon them as the coming patrimony of freedom and the gospel—who can estimate how much we owe to their heroically hopeful spirit? Through savage foes, pestilential diseases, assailments of wild beasts, privation, famine, and sometimes martyrdom, they pressed on their way until they conquered a new home for liberty, a new treasure-house for humanity, and a new opportunity for the world.

8. The disciplinary power of this “stanch, adventurous, and eagle-eyed” faculty has much to do with the development of the soul, which learns under its tuition to eagerly desire, and strenuously plan, and mightily contend for greater deeds and deeper experiences in the time to come. By waiting, expecting, never giving up, always looking forward, laying hold

day by day on the Power of the Future, catching hourly glimpses of frowning heights ahead, and resolving to scale them, anticipating the battles of the morrow and preparing to win them, enduring without finching or complaining all the knocks and rebuffs and hurts that come from time to time, but still pressing on and up—thus character is matured, and the soul is made great, and eternal life is assured. And that in a single sentence is the great lesson of the Book of Hope!

9. The ministrations of this noble grace to the Christian believer are vividly portrayed by Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*. It shows the insight of this writer that he placed alongside of Christian in the most critical conflicts and temptations of the pilgrimage, as his companion and guide, a man by the name of Hopeful, who even in the prison of Giant Despair could say, "Let us be patient and endure awhile; the time may come that will give us a happy release." It was Hopeful who thought of the key of Promise by which to unlock the dungeon doors. It was Hopeful who sustained Christian in the depths of the river, when, even with the towers and battlements of the city in view, the feet of the Pilgrim were slipping and his senses reeling under the stress of the last struggle. It was Hopeful who kept his brother's head above the waters, encouraged him when half dead with fright, and shouted in his ears, "I see the gate and men standing by to receive you. Cheer up!" It was Hopeful who held up his fellow pilgrim, took him by the hand, led him through the

waters to the farther bank, where the welcome given to arriving pilgrims was administered! Blessed Brother Hopeful! Who has not been ministered to by him in time of trial and depression? Who has not been gladdened and buoyed up and comforted and animated for a further struggle by his example and spirit and helping hand?

10. Back of the greatest movement of the centuries—the campaign for the evangelization of the world—lies this fundamental grace, the expectation and desire for the capture of all nations for Jesus Christ. He said: “Go, make disciples of all nations. The field is the world. This gospel shall be preached to all nations.” Paul caught the vision and outlined his plans for the evangelization of the Gentiles. For ages the Church halted in view of the walls of isolation which encompassed the hermit nations of the Orient, and tarried, for a long time in apathy and unbelief, and then for a generation or more in prayer, for the gates to be opened and the walls to be broken down. To-day these petitions have been gloriously answered, for the doors of separation have been opened wide, and the opportune hour has sounded for the advance of the armies of the King all along the line—in the Turkish empire, in the Dark Continent, in China, Korea, Japan, and the islands of the sea. To the Church, confronting opportunities such as never before stirred the heart of Christ’s followers, the Angel of Hope sings her song from the Word:

The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. . . . He shall have dominion also

from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth. . . . The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. . . . His name shall endure forever. . . . The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. The heathen shall be his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth his possession. The whole earth shall be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen.

This vision of the conquest of the whole world by the gospel shines to-day before the eye of Christendom. The men who know most thoroughly the difficulties of the task—the thronging millions of heathenism, the tremendous power of caste, of idolatrous practices, and of Oriental creeds; the debasing superstitions and vices of savage lands, and the almost invincible hold which prejudice has upon the non-Christian races and lands—see the vision most clearly and believe in it most profoundly. It is not the men at the front who raise a question concerning the possibility of winning the world for Christ—it is the men in the rear!

Meanwhile, we merely indicate at a glance the fact that one of the great attractions of the Book is its picture of a world redeemed by Jesus Christ and finally won by his gospel.

11. There yet remains to be briefly indicated a concluding function of the hope set before us in the gospel; but before glancing at it, and in that glance bringing this discussion to a close, it may be worth while to suggest the evidential value of the phases of the Bible which we have now brought to view. In these chapters the Scriptures have been permitted to speak for themselves, the task of the author being

to uncover and set in organic array their amazing attractions, the multiform phases of their power. It is left for the reader of this volume to ask: "Whence came these marvelous utterances, these transcendent charms, these matchless exhibitions of wisdom, sublimity, and manifold beauty? What elements in this Book separate it in splendid isolation from all other books on earth? How has it come that the writers of the books of Scripture, sundered one from another by isolating circumstances—their geographical locations, their situations in the midst of different ages, their varieties of environing civilizations and languages—how has it come that they give such a finally unified view of God, and man, and sin, and salvation, of time and eternity, of life, and death, and immortality? Whence came the unifying spirit, the enlarging and harmonious scope, the increasingly vivid unfolding of the will of the Creator, and the culmination of the whole record as found in the New Covenant? How may we account for the searching, awakening, revealing ministry of this Book, in its operations on the heart and conscience of man? Taking the volume as a whole, whence did it come? How must we, as rational beings, account for its origin, its history, its authority, and its ever-increasing influence?"

We leave these questions with the reader to answer. It will be seen, at a glance, that some of the current questions in biblical criticism, and some objections often raised in opposition to the claims of the Bible, are in this view of the case simply ruled out of court,

as immaterial to the case—they have no standing here. The contents of the Bible as outlined in their essence, their substance, their vital character, in this volume do not depend for their worth or authority on the matters now occupying the attention of the world of biblical interpreters—as to the authorship and date of the Hexateuch, the interpretation of a few chapters in Genesis, the dual authorship of Isaiah, the relation of David to the book of Psalms, and the question, “Who wrote Ecclesiastes?” On the other hand, we may rightly say to all men everywhere who read the Scripture: Here is a Book of unquestioned beauty, of literally matchless attractions, of life-giving qualities, a Book that bears on nearly every page some token of a superhuman relationship. Aside from all questions of the Old Testament miracles, or any inquiry concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch—questions which are not vital, which do not inhere in the substantial claims and ministry of the volume—the Bible has underlying qualities, phases, and claims which make it absolutely a unique, a distinctive, a solitary book, with an age-long and world-wide influence, and an individualizing, an uplifting, a comforting function which ally it vitally and intimately with the universal human heart. Answer for yourself and say, in all candor, Whence did this book get this uplifting, renewing, saving power?

And now, after this brief summing up of the case, we are ready for the closing paragraph, in which to note the final functions, the last blessed ministrations of the messages of the Book.

12. Christian hope attends the believer by its cheering ministries to the very last, alleviating his griefs, animating him for his struggles, supporting him in his pilgrimage, till the inevitable end appears in sight. At last, when all mortal succor is vain, when friendship, and medical skill, and womanly sympathy, and will-power, and fortitude have done all that they can do to sustain and encourage the dying believer—then hope achieves her culminating triumph, uncovering the splendors of eternity, opening the gateway of the skies, revealing friends waiting for the home-coming, the Saviour himself ready to bestow the crown, the beatific vision, the robe, the scepter, and the regal welcome, all in store in the city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Under the spell of this celestial vision, opened up by Hope, the departing saint exultingly testifies:

I shall see my loved ones again, and they shall be mine for evermore. I shall gain the crown promised to them who are faithful unto death. I shall enter into the rest that remaineth for them that love the Redeemer. Death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed. I shall hear the Master say, Well done; enter into the joy of thy Lord.

For the individual believer this is the peaceful and victorious issue which the Book of Hope portrays as the outcome of a faithful and consecrated life: After toil, rest; after conflict, victory; after the struggle, the crown!

For the human race there is left on the closing page of this Book of Endless Charms this portrayal of the Great Consummation:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no

more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more.

Rev. 22. 3-5

And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Christian poets by the score, pondering the unveiled splendors of the heavenly city, in the above and in other passages of Scripture, have been uplifted and inspired to utter praise and prayer in songs that will never die. Christopher Wordsworth, for example, the Anglican bishop and hymn writer, sings:

They have come from tribulation, and have washed their
 robes in blood,
 Washed them in the blood of Jesus; tried they were, and
 firm they stood;
 Gladly, Lord, with thee they suffered; gladly, Lord, with
 thee they died,
 And by death to life immortal they were born and glorified.

John Berridge, an English clergyman, during a long and dangerous illness in 1772, wrote many songs of heaven, of which this stanza is typical:

O happy saints, who dwell in light,
 And walk with Jesus, clothed in white;
 Safe landed on that peaceful shore,
 Where pilgrims meet to part no more.

And Peter Damiana, the monk and bishop, in his great Latin hymn, beginning,

Ad perennis vitæ fontem,

wrote these lines, which have reëchoed for a thousand years since they were composed:

Christ, the Palm of faithful victors! of that city make me
free;

When my warfare is accomplished, to its mansions lead
thou me,—

Grant me, with its happy inmates, sharer of thy gifts to be!

And now, at the last, we may illuminate and at the same time conclude these studies of the Charms of the Bible by reproducing from one of the hymns of Godfrey Thring—a recently deceased English clergyman, the author of many notable sacred lyrics—two stanzas which may help us to see new beauties in the vision of Saint John, as quoted from the book of Revelation, and which may also prompt us to utter as the prayer of our deepest hearts the aspiration with which the verses end:

O great and glorious vision!
The Lamb upon his throne:
O wondrous sight for man to see!—
The Saviour with his own;
To drink the living waters,
And stand upon the shore,
Where neither sorrow, sin, nor death
Shall ever enter more.

O Lamb of God who reignest—
Thou Bright and Morning Star—
Whose glory lightens that new earth
Which now we see from far;
O worthy Judge Eternal,
When thou dost bid us come,
Then open wide the gates of pearl
And call thy servants home!

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